

OXFORD

# IBÂDĪSM

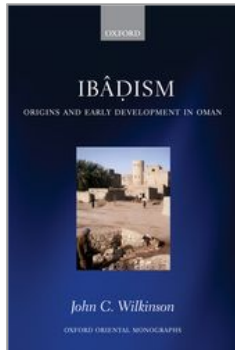
ORIGINS AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT IN OMAN



*John C. Wilkinson*

OXFORD ORIENTAL MONOGRAPHS

University Press Scholarship Online  
Oxford Scholarship Online



**Ibâdism: Origins and Early Development in Oman**

John C. Wilkinson

Print publication date: 2010

Print ISBN-13: 9780199588268

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2011

DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.001.0001

Title Pages

Ibâdism: Origins and Early Development in Oman Oxford Oriental Monographs

Ibâdism: Origins and Early Development in Oman

This series of monographs from the Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Oxford, makes available the results of recent research by scholars connected with the Faculty. Its range of subject matter includes language, literature, thought, history, and art; its geographical scope extends from the Mediterranean and Caucasus to East Asia. The emphasis is more on specialist studies than on works of a general nature.

**Editorial Board**

John Baines *Professor of Egyptology*

Bjarke Frellesvig *Professor of Japanese Linguistics*

Christopher Minkowski *Boden Professor of Sanskrit*

Charles Ramble *University Lecturer in Tibetan and Himalayan Studies*

Robert Thomson *formerly Calouste Gulbenkian Professor of Armenian Studies*

Geert Jan van Gelder, *Laudian Professor of Arabic*

**OXFORD**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

**OXFORD**  
(p.iv) UNIVERSITY PRESS

Great Clarendon Street, Oxford OX2 6DP

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford.  
It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship,  
and education by publishing worldwide in

Oxford New York

Auckland Cape Town Dar es Salaam Hong Kong Karachi  
Kuala Lumpur Madrid Melbourne Mexico City Nairobi  
New Delhi Shanghai Taipei Toronto

With offices in

Argentina Austria Brazil Chile Czech Republic France Greece  
Guatemala Hungary Italy Japan Poland Portugal Singapore  
South Korea Switzerland Thailand Turkey Ukraine Vietnam

Oxford is a registered trade mark of Oxford University Press  
in the UK and in certain other countries

Published in the United States  
by Oxford University Press Inc., New York

© John C. Wilkinson 2010

The moral rights of the author have been asserted  
Database right Oxford University Press (maker)

First published 2010

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced,  
stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means,  
without the prior permission in writing of Oxford University Press,  
or as expressly permitted by law, or under terms agreed with the appropriate  
reprographics rights organization. Enquiries concerning reproduction  
outside the scope of the above should be sent to the Rights Department,  
Oxford University Press, at the address above

You must not circulate this book in any other binding or cover

and you must impose this same condition on any acquirer

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Data available

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Data available

Typeset by RefineCatch Limited, Bungay, Suffolk

Printed in Great Britain

on acid-free paper by

CPI Antony Rowe, Chippenham, Wiltshire

ISBN 978-0-19-958826-8

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

## **Contents**

Title Pages

Dedication

Maps and Table

Introduction

Acknowledgements

Conventions

Geographical Note

A Preliminary Note on Omani and Ibâḍi Sources

1 The Pre-Islamic Heritage: Yaman and Nizâr

2 The Pre-Islamic Heritage: Mazûn and the Arabization of Arabia

3 The Conversion to Islam

4 The Omani Tribes in Basra

5 The Origins of Ibâḍism

6 The Early Ibâḍis

7 The Propagation of Ibâḍism from Basra

8 The Establishment of the Imamate in Oman

9 Law and Order

10 The Ibâḍi Ethos

11 Civil War and Aftermath

12 Consequences

13 The 6/12th Century

14 Madhhabization

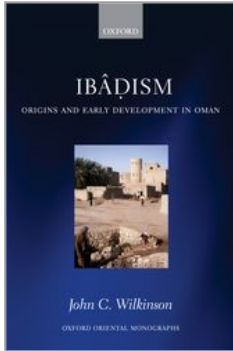
End Matter

References

General Index

Index of Arabic Terminology

University Press Scholarship Online  
**Oxford Scholarship Online**



**Ibâdism: Origins and Early Development in Oman**

John C. Wilkinson

Print publication date: 2010

Print ISBN-13: 9780199588268

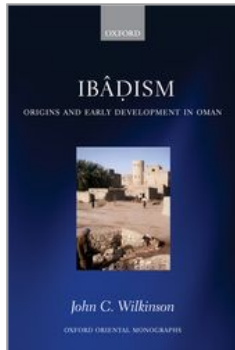
Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2011

DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.001.0001

**Dedication**

**(p.v)** In memory of a great Omani scholar, 'Abdullâh b. Ḥumayd al-Sâlimi (1868-1914) 'Words and Deeds' **(p.vi)**

University Press Scholarship Online  
**Oxford Scholarship Online**



**Ibâdism: Origins and Early Development in Oman**

John C. Wilkinson

Print publication date: 2010

Print ISBN-13: 9780199588268

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2011

DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.001.0001

**(p.viii)** Maps and Table

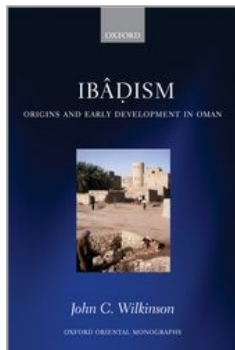
Genealogical Table: The Azd (after 'Awtabi) xxi

Map 1. The Old Regional Names of Oman xxii

Map 2. Central Oman xxiii

Map 3. Northern Oman. (Reproduced from John C. Wilkinson, *The Imamate Tradition of Oman* (Cambridge, 1987), by kind permission of Cambridge University Press.) xxiv

University Press Scholarship Online  
**Oxford Scholarship Online**



## Ibâdism: Origins and Early Development in Oman

John C. Wilkinson

Print publication date: 2010

Print ISBN-13: 9780199588268

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2011

DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.001.0001

### **(p.ix)** Introduction

#### Origins

Ibâdism represents a branch of the third great division in Islam resulting from the civil war a quarter of a century after the death of the Prophet, that of the Khawârij, or as they themselves prefer to be called, the Muḥakkima. It survives in some isolated communities in North Africa (the Maghrib), but manifested itself periodically in Oman as a full Imamate down to the second half of the twentieth century. As the Omanis say, the true *'ilm* (learning) is like a bird, the egg was laid in Madina, hatched in Basra, and flew to Oman.

Yet curiously, the standard account of Ibâḍi origins emerged neither in Basra nor Oman, but in late Maghribi sources, and it is this account that has imposed itself in both regions and in Western accounts of Ibâḍi beginnings.

It essentially runs as follows. The Ibâḍis, who take their name from 'Abdullah Ibn Ibâḍ, had their roots in the Muḥakkima secession from the Caliph 'Ali as a result of the arbitration agreement following the battle of Şiffin. Their unity was sundered in the crisis of the second *fitna* (civil war that started in 64/684), when it split into three main groups, with the extremist Azâriqa and the moderate Ibâḍis at opposite poles, and the Şufri somewhere in between. Under the leadership of a series of Imams in Basra operating in secrecy (*kitmân*), the first of whom was Jâbir b. Zayd, the movement activated under the leadership of his successor Abû 'Ubayda Muslim b. Abi Karîma and temporarily set up an Imamate under 'Abdullâh b. Yaḥyâ al-Kindi (Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq) in south-west Arabia, followed by a short-lived one in Oman (al-Juliandâ b. Mas'ûd) at the end of Umayyad times. Finally, as the result of Basran missionary activities, full Imamates were established during the time of the third Basran Imam, al-Rabî' b. Ḥabîb, first in North Africa under the Rustamids of Tahert, and then a couple of decades later in Oman. Once established, the Basran school wound up and Abû 'Abdullâh Muḥammad, son of the fifth and last secret Imam, Abû Sufyân Maḥbûb b. al-Ruḥayl, settled in Oman. Likewise, the *'ilm* passed and was developed from Ibn 'Abbâs and seventy who had died at Badr, through this line of early Ibâḍis,



including a *ḥadīth* collection essentially transmitted from Jâbir by Abû 'Ubayda to his pupil al-Rabî'.

Using quasi-contemporary material recorded in the Mashriq itself, the present study deconstructs this model and attempts to replace it with a **(p.x)** new interpretation, while also explaining how the Maghribi view of Ibâḍi origins developed, and why it finally became accepted in Oman also. These early sources allow us to piece together some idea of how Ibâḍi theology (*kalâm*) and jurisprudence (*fiqh*) evolved and was influenced by, or reacted to, Qadari, Mu'tazili, Murji'i, and extremist Khâriji dogma, and how its own *fiqh* developed from the early *ra'y* (opinion), as exhibited by Jâbir and al-Rabî's *futyâ*, conforming increasingly to Shâfi'i-Ash'ari norms during the course of the 5/11<sup>th</sup> and 6/12<sup>th</sup> centuries in Oman, but with the great exception of Sunni *isnâd* scholarship. *Sunna* and *ḥadīth* were absorbed into the *âthâr* of the community, partly as a result of being exposed to the regional influences of the dominant Sunni schools (Mâliki in the Maghrib, Shâfi'i in southern Arabia), a process accelerated by foreign occupation after the First Imamate in Oman collapsed in civil war at the end of the 3/9<sup>th</sup> century and the surviving community was split by an ever more virulent debate between the so-called Rustâq and Nizwâ parties over its causes. Those *âthâr* had essentially been the outcome of debate by the leading '*ulamâ*' in each generation, both with respect to dogma, its moral code (*amr bi'l-ma'rûf*), and those they recognized or rejected as the leading figures of the true Muslim community. This was enshrined in the obligation (*farḍ*) of *walâya*, the spiritual and physical cement of the community binding it to God, and *barâ'a*, its opposite, so that the *âthâr*, the print of each generation, devolved on its successors.

Who these worthies were was well known, but their incorporation into a formal line of teachers of the true knowledge (*ḥamalât al-'ilm*) was essentially the work of the Omani al-'Awtabi in the second half of the 5/11<sup>th</sup> century. Unlike Oman, where the Imamate and practice of Ibâḍism never went into abeyance, a different approach was required in North Africa for ensuring survival of their scattered communities after the collapse of the Tahert Imamate and the hope of re-establishing an Ibâḍi state abandoned. It is now that the idea of the contrast between an Imam in *kitmân* and *zuhûr* really developed and the past rationalized accordingly. And to show that they were the oldest of all the schools there appeared, under the wand of the cosmopolitan Abû Ya'qûb Yûsuf al-Warjîlânî (d. 570/1174), the appropriately named *Tartîb* (Arrangement) of *ḥadīth* transmitted by Abû 'Ubayda's pupil al-Rabî' (d. c. 170!), the Ibâḍis' al-Jâmi' *al-Ṣaḥîḥ*.

However, none of this may be looked at in abstract, and the evolution of Ibâḍism both into a *madhhab* and its activation to create Imamates in southern Arabia and the Maghrib can only be understood in a wider historical perspective, and in particular a study of the tribal dimension which continued to dominate the history of Ibâḍism in Oman down to the twentieth century. So the standard model, of the Azâriqa and Ibâḍis being at opposite poles with the Ṣufri somewhere in the middle, as **(p.xi)** developed by the heresiographers simply does not stand up to analysis. The Ṣufri, in fact, represented the new moderate activists (as against the extremist Azâriqa-Najdiyya), and their revolts against the Umayyads preceded the activation of the Ibâḍi *da'wa* because they operated essentially among the 'Nizâri' tribes in Iraq. The first Muḥakkima/Khâriji secessions took place around Kûfa and essentially involved local Tamîmi and Bakri elements, and likewise the rest of the true line of revolts the Ibâḍis recognize down to Abû Bilâl in 61/680.

---

All the main Khâriji leaders (including the mysterious Ibn Ibâd) who went to interview Ibn Zubayr and subsequently split the movement were Tamîmis. Thereafter the Ibâdis recognize no authentic *khurûj* until their own, sixty-seven years later. Their movement had its roots not in Kûfa, but Basra, and they only found fertile ground to exploit after the two great 'Yamani' revolts of Ibn al-Ash'ath al-Kindi and Yazîd b. al-Muhallab al-Azdi had been crushed (the spelling Yaman represents the tribal label, Yemen the region). There were no essential dogma differences between the Ibâdis and Şufris, merely the tribal milieus in which they operated, both in the Mashriq and the Maghrib, where the Berber population similarly found an ideology to reject Caliphate oppression.

Since it is a key notion of this book that Ibâdism provided the ideology for the major Yaman tribes in Iraq to set up Imamates in their homelands in southern Arabia and also export it to North Africa, it is essential once again to try and reassess what Yaman represented in the early Islamic period, and in particular the relationship between Azd and Kinda, both in the Iraqi and Arabian domains. It is the writer's contention that there was indeed a divide between the northern and southern Arab tribes, and that Yamani identity had deep roots in the pre-Islamic history of South Arabia. This theme is pursued in the first part of the book, using new epigraphic evidence concerning the Sabaeo-Himyarite state and its associated Arab tribes, coupled to the detailed accounts of Arab migrations given in the Omani sources, as well as the Arabo-Islamic tradition.

Khâriji movements not only divided along tribal lines, but in the Mashriq only really found roots in the ex-Sasanid lands. Their social attitudes and ethos were essentially opposed to Hijazi hegemony and rooted in the idea of equality before God's *ḥukm* as revealed in the Qur'ân: so they consistently remitted the taxes on the peasants and 'ulûj classes who had merely exchanged one set of masters for another. That is part of the reasons why in Oman the tribesmen eventually became villagers and the villagers tribesmen, a remarkable assimilation that does not characterize either Greater Bahrayn or southern Arabia, despite the fact that they too came under Khâriji or other radical socio-religious movements in the early Islamic period. But it was a slow process and the **(p.xii)** conversion of the peasant *majûs* and the privatization of the land is also a subject that is treated in this study.

So it was in this social and tribal milieu that a particular stream of Muḥakkima ideology that became labelled as Ibâdi found fertile ground to activate their movement. It was the outcome of a common approach to such issues as the rights and wrongs of the *fitnas* and the existing regime that began to gel in the majlises of those I term 'proto-Ibâdis'. It did not develop from any formalized structure in Basra led by an Imam in *kitmân*, but as an ideology amongst those who wanted to re-establish the true Islamic state, and whose activists started to exploit discontent in particular tribal, racial, and geographical milieus in the margins of the Islamic empire. Their means of doing so is also one of the themes examined; through the Hajj, through tribal and merchant networks, through missionary activities, and eventually, once the Rustamid Imamate was established in the 160s, increasingly with written works. Who these early figures active in Basra were is absolutely central to understanding the origins and nature of the movement. Above all, the roles of Jâbir b. Zayd and Abû 'Ubayda need careful re-examination (the Omanis ignore Abû 'Ubayda and see al-Rabî' as the key figure), while a number of others, like ʿUmâm b. al-Sâ'ib, Ḥâjib al-Ṭâ'iy, Shabîb b. 'Aṭiyya, and also Sâlim b. Dhakwân emerge as people of far

---

greater importance in the early phase than is accorded in the standardized histories. Particularly interesting for studying their roles is the correspondence of Jâbir b. Zayd (covering roughly the period 70–90) and I have some other suggestions about whom the first supposed letter of Ibn Ibâdî (IB 1) was addressed to. Also of importance is the authorship of the *K. Abi Sufyân*, since the history of the early Ibâdî movement, as recorded many centuries later by the likes of Darjîni and Shammâkhi in the Maghrib, in some considerable measure derives from this work attributed to the last Basran Imam. The existence of books like the *K. Dumâm*, the *K. Abi Nûh*, the *Âthâr* of al-Rabî', as well as the collected opinions of Jâbir, is by no means a guarantee they were the authors, rather the contrary: they were almost certainly recorded by pupils or even collected two or three generations on. I have similarly reconsidered the compilation of another important early work that appears in the Maghrib, the *Mudawwana*.

### Survival

One of the strengths of Ibâdism has been the ability to adjust to the peculiarities of the regions where it became implanted. So its early development in Oman moulded itself to the tribal milieu, and in turn modified the nature of the relationship between tribe and state. So while its ideology **(p.xiii)** remained geared to the maintenance of true Islamic government, it also represented an expression of Oman's regional identity, open on the one side to the trade of the Indian Ocean, and on the other in an inward-looking tribal society, with a sturdy sense of independence, locked in its mountain fastnesses. Under the guidance of Abû Sufyân's son, Abû 'Abdullâh (d. 260/873), many basic principals of state organization were established. At the same time, a large corpus of practical legislation emerged. One particularly interesting aspect was the harmonization of Islamic *fiqh* with the needs for a code of maritime law, relevant to Sohar's central role in the rapidly expanding Indian Ocean maritime trade (the pre-Islamic *Arḍ al-Hind*). Another was to meet the needs of the country's agricultural economy, largely based on the ancient, but fragile, underground *qanât* irrigation system: particularly interesting in the early phases, since agricultural production, along with mining and crafts, remained largely in the hands of the Persianized *majûs* population.

It is because dogma and legal interpretations remained sufficiently fluid to adjust to changing political and economic circumstances, through the concept of an ongoing living tradition based on consensus in interpreting the law, that the Imamate ideology persisted as a unifying force in Omani society. In the Maghrib, ideology adjusted to the survival of small, widely dispersed communities from as far apart as the Jabal Nafûsa to the Mzab, essentially amongst a Berber population. In the Maghrib, it should always be remembered, it was only a handful of scholars who could read Arabic and were capable of interpreting their Mashriqi origins. As their training and organization became formalized in the *ḥalqa*, they developed almost into a class apart, the *'azzâba*, but their deliberations were taken in conjunction with the laic members of the community. That led to a tension between those who tried to maintain the values of Ibâdism and refused to study anything that was not Ibâdî, and those developing a strong theoretical base to justify the distinctiveness of their *madhhab* and counter other schools. Abû Ya'qûb's work was the outcome of the latter approach and has interesting parallels with his Omani contemporary, al-Qalhâti.

For some of these same problems faced Oman in the aftermath of the so-called Nizâr—Yaman civil war. In the period under consideration maritime trade remained under the control of

outside powers (Şaffârids, Qarâmiṭa, Bûyids, Saljûqs), either directly or through vassals, with one-short lived exception. Despite this foreign presence on the coast, Ibâḍism continued to survive as a political movement in the mountainous interior, geared to the restoration of the Imamate, with periodic success, rather than simple survival as in the Maghrib. With few exceptions, local administration was in the hands of Ibâḍi qadis and walis. One consequence was the major development of Ibâḍi *fiqh* concerning relations **(p.xiv)** with 'tyrants', the *jabâbira* and *ahl al-baghy*, associated with which came a rationalization of the various forms of Imam, *shâri*, *difa'i*, and *ḍa'if* (no *kitmân*). But it also led to a dogma dispute over the rights and wrongs of deposing the Imam al-Şalt b. Mâlik al-Kharûši in 272/886, the event that had sparked off civil war. Its causes are carefully analysed and shown to be far less Nizâr versus Yaman, as the losers presented it to the Caliphate authorities, but between the tribes of the northern periphery and central Oman. The 'ulamâ's' dispute was taken up by the Yaḥmad tribes in the Rustâq area to claim the right to the restored Imamate, and ending with a formal decree (443/1052) outlawing the Nizwâ party, which had enjoined suspending judgement over the issue, and who for a while had re-established an Imamate with tribally neutral Imams at its seat at Nizwâ. Their extremism resulted in the final alienation of northern Oman and consequently exposed it to new migrations, notably of 'Ârnir Rabî'a tribes from neighbouring Bahrayn, the break-away of the Hadramawt, and eventually the final demise of Ibâḍism there. Yet while this dispute highlights the strengths and weaknesses of the Imamate as an institution and the fragmentation of the political geography of Oman, its ideology found life in a major flourishing of scholarship, the development of Ibâḍism as a *madhhab*, and even missions and missives to Ibâḍi communities in the Indian Ocean (Kilwa, Mansûra) and Persia. In this process the work of Abû Sa'îd al-Kudami, Ibn Baraka, al-'Awtabi, and al-Qalhâti are especially examined and some attempt made to compare them with their equivalents in the Maghrib.

Integral with the process of madhhabization were the efforts to recover and set down earlier material, which had largely been transmitted orally through a teacher—pupil line. This more or less resulted in the abandonment of the *siyar*, the old form of written missive, in favour of *ḥifẓ*, and the collection of the judicial views and their precedents from the leading 'ulamâ' into compilations (*jawâmi'*), culminating in such massive works as the *Muṣannaf* and *Bayân al-Shar'*. It also resulted in the rediscovery of some early works like the *Sîra* of Sâlim b. Dhakwân and also a growing exchange with the Maghribis, so that a certain convergence developed between the two regions. There, material originally emanating from the Mashriq and specifically written for them consequently became tailored to provide a rational explanation of Basran origins. However, their account only really began to impose itself in Oman when Ibâḍism revived as a form of *salafiyya* movement from the late eighteenth century. Even so, it had little effect until the *nahḍa*, the political activation to restore the Imamate during the second half of the nineteenth century. But even then, the Ibâḍis' *ḥadîth* collection served more as a piece of propaganda, by laying claim that it antedated those of the Sunnis. Abû Ya'qûb's '*Tartîb*', is a *tour de passe-passe* and has done great disservice to the Ibâḍis, leading **(p.xv)** to their being designated in the Maghrib as the 'Fifthers' (after the four Sunni schools).

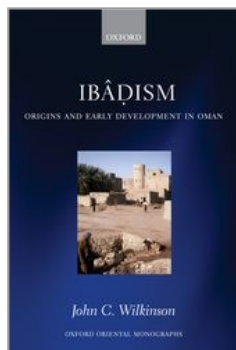
However, that period of revivalism in Oman is a subject that goes beyond the range of this book. Already it covers a long enough period, starting more or less in Sasanid times (with touches even earlier) and finishing at the turn of the 6/7/12-13<sup>th</sup> centuries. As such, it requires not only

---

making sense of the fragmentary material relevant to the nature of theological and judicial dispute and where Ibâḍism took root, but also its relationship to mainline history and dogma disputes in an area extending from Khurâsân to Tahert. I have naturally concentrated on Oman and tried to piece together something concerning Hadramawt, both areas where Imamates were established, but fortunately there already exists a large field of scholarship to serve as a guide for the Maghrib. Even so, I have set myself an impossibly large task, *a fortiori* since for nearly twenty years I dropped my original interests in Oman and Ibâḍism, and was only re-stimulated relatively recently to pick them up again. At best I can hope to throw some new light on the matters dealt with, but inevitably I have made errors and misunderstood texts, doubtless overlooked many works that deserved to be cited, and have made tenuous suggestions that may cause ire, notably among the Ibâḍis themselves when I question the role of certain early figures in the movement and substitute others. But as this is my farewell work on the subject I hope it will be seen for what it is, an attempt to construct an overview that reinterprets what is meant when the Omanis say that the true *'ilm* was like a bird, the egg was laid in Madina, hatched in Basra, and flew to Oman.

*Ars longa, vita brevis.*

University Press Scholarship Online  
**Oxford Scholarship Online**



## **Ibâdism: Origins and Early Development in Oman**

John C. Wilkinson

Print publication date: 2010

Print ISBN-13: 9780199588268

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2011

DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.001.0001

### **(p.xvi) Acknowledgements**

This book would not exist had it not been for the encouragement and help given me by His Excellency al-Shaykh 'Abdullâh b. Muḥammad al-Sâlimi, Minister of Religious Affairs and Endowments in Oman. It is now well over forty years since I first started working on Oman, and my initial interest was largely concerned with the traditional geographical and social organization of the country, and its extraordinary irrigation system. That naturally set off further research into the nature of the Ibâḍi Imamate, and in particular its relationship to the tribal structure and economy of the country. The fact that the Imamate survived, off and on, into the middle of the twentieth century in turn led to a study of the modern period, and resulted in my third book, that dealing with the evolution of modern state formation in south-east Arabia and the history of boundary drawing there. All this gave rise to some questioning in my mind concerning the standard accounts of the origins of Ibâḍism, and I did publish a couple of preliminary investigative articles. However, I failed to pursue this theme, since I had also been increasingly fascinated by the story of the Omanis in the Congo, and this led me in retirement to shift interest to the role of the Arabs in the 'Scramble for Africa', with the project of a trilogy of books, the first of which I have now published. It was Shaykh 'Abdullâh and his nephew, Dr 'Abd al-Raḥmân b. Sulaymân al-Sâlimi, who persuaded me to return to my earlier interest.

Meanwhile, the study of Ibâḍism itself had not been at a standstill. There has always been an interest by Western scholars in the vestigial communities in North Africa, using for the most part relatively late sources, and from these has developed a sizeable literature concerning the history of Ibâḍism in the Maghrib, along with a standardized account of origins in Basira. One immediately thinks of the enormous output of Lewicki, but one should not forget his predecessor Smogorzewski, nor the work of the French, who, following the pioneering publications of Masqueray, Motylinski, and Zeys, have been particularly rich in studies of the societies in which Ibâḍism implanted in Algeria. And in more recent years the publications of Schwartz and Rebstock in German have contributed considerably to the history of the establishment of the Tahert Imamate, along with numerous theses in French for the period following, and the institutions of the *ḥalqa*. Similarly there has been research on legal and theological aspects,

notably the contributions of Schacht and Cuperly, as too the Italians who used the manuscripts deposited at Naples (**p.xvii**) after the occupation of the Jabal Nafûsa (Crupi La Rosa, Moreno, Rubinacci, Veccia Vaglieri): but once again essentially using sources posterior to the period of the present book. The one great exception is the much-lamented Amr Khalifa Ennami, whose 1971 Cambridge thesis opened up a huge new field of investigation from little-known Maghribi manuscripts, many of which originated from the Mashriq, the homeland of the Ibâḍis.

But in recent years there has also been a growing interest in the earliest literature and the light it throws on the early development of Islam itself. Most earlier publications concerning Ibâḍism in Oman used late sources, notably the *Kashf* (see the Preliminary Note on Sources below), but the appearance of a number of early manuscripts and publications from the library of the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture after the change of government in 1970 led to some important specialist studies in the last quarter of the twentieth century, notably from Cook, van Ess, Madelung, and the exemplary edition of Sâlim b. Dhakwân's epistle from Crone and Zimmermann; and more recently Francesca and, for modern Ibâḍism, Hoffman. In Ibâḍi circles themselves there has also been a major reawakening and many publications in Arabic, but for the most part the scholars operate within the traditional paradigm concerning origins. One major work, however, the Durham thesis of Abd al-Rahman Al-Salmi (al-Sâlimi) on the so-called *siyar* literature, opened up further vistas, and he has now embarked on an important phase of publication of both history and texts. Not only did he encourage me to restart my work on the origins of Ibâḍism, but he plied me with material, including photocopies of manuscripts from the al-Sâlimi library.

Nevertheless, this relatively recent spurt of research into Ibâḍism has been largely piecemeal, lacking a more general framework to relate to. So I decided, as my final contribution, to try and provide such a panoramic view and at the same time to look at the very nature of Ibâḍism and how it evolved in the first six Islamic centuries. Little did I realize what I was undertaking. Not only had I to catch up on the last twenty years of publication, but my Arabic had become extremely rusty, and I was overwhelmed by the sheer quantity of primary material emerging from both the Maghrib and Oman. Too much material, too little time for treating so vast a subject.

So I am particularly grateful for those who have helped me after I first started putting finger to keyboard again. Robert Hoyland politely indicated the failings of my first drafts of the pre-Islamic period and kindly pointed me towards somewhat more modern material than that used in my thesis of forty years ago! As a result Christian Robin provided copies of his numerous articles, published and unpublished, on the epigraphic evidence, while Dan Potts, on being re-contacted, did likewise (**p.xviii**) for archaeological advances. In fact I became so enthusiastic that the first couple of chapters almost became a book in itself, and had to be seriously pruned: even then perhaps not enough. Michael Lecker made some helpful suggestions about Chapter 3, for which I thank him, as too Dr Moez Dridi, who not only put me on to some useful references but also generally helped to find my way around the libraries in Paris, where I now live. Martin Custers recently gave me copies of his admirable bibliographies, whose annotations are themselves of the greatest value. *Kalâm* is not my subject, but inevitably I had to tackle it and I am most grateful to Wilferd Madelung who clarified some of my ideas: any howlers that remain are entirely of my own making.

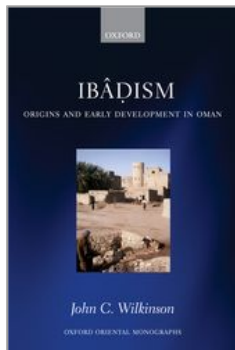
---

I owe a particular debt of gratitude to Michael Cook, who has unflinchingly given of his own valuable time, which doubtless could have been better used to further his own outstanding publications, but who continuously helped me, particularly over the chapters on Basran origins, and who in the end read the whole draft. I regret that my own efforts can never hope to meet up with his own scholastic standards, and I apologize for my shortcomings in transliteration and grammar. There is one other person I would like to acknowledge for his inspiration: the late Martin Hinds, whose premature death deprived specialists in the early Islamic period of a great and original scholar, and whose research would one day have thrown considerable light on the murky problems of Ibâdî origins.

It is particularly pleasing for me that my work should be published in the Oxford Oriental Monograph Series. It was under the Oriental Faculty that I presented my thesis when I came back to Oxford after working in the oil business, and it was the Clarendon Press which published my first book on Oman in their Oxford Research Studies in Geography series. Although I found my home in the Geography Faculty as a Lecturer and then Reader in the Geography of the Middle East, I continued to keep one foot in the Oriental Institute, and it is now under the aegis of their editorial board that I present the conclusion of my research, which started when the late Albert Hourani and Freddy Beeston agreed to supervise an enthusiastic, but ill-trained Arabist back in 1966. I also wish to express my appreciation to the two anonymous readers who had the patience to read the draft of this book as initially submitted to the Oxford University Press and whose encouragement and helpful suggestions I have tried to implement as best I can.



University Press Scholarship Online  
**Oxford Scholarship Online**



## Ibâḍism: Origins and Early Development in Oman

John C. Wilkinson

Print publication date: 2010

Print ISBN-13: 9780199588268

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2011

DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.001.0001

### (p.xix) Conventions

The spelling **Yaman** is used for the tribal division (Yaman—Nizâr); **Yemen** designates the country.

**Bahrayn** (al-Baḥrayn) = Greater Baḥrayn (see Geographical Note) and Bahrein, the archipelago. I have also used conventional English spellings for certain frequently mentioned places (e.g. Sohar for Ṣuḥâr).

### Transliteration

The essential is that the Arab terminology should be recognizable to the specialist. My system is hybrid and sometimes inconsistent (I do not normally mark the final y as long *î* except in transliterating an Arab phrase), as too the vowelling. I have also resorted on occasion to local Omani spelling (e.g. Ṭayy when referring to the tribe in general). As some excuse it should be noted that Omani texts are not altogether purist, especially as regards use of a *hamza* (e.g. *rûya* rather than *ru'ya*).

### Dating

I have generally shown both the Islamic AH and Christian AD calendar dates together, but the Islamic date is normally the determining one. In the very early Islamic period I sometimes use only the Islamic dates, since they provide a much more logical sequence and the exact Christian equivalent would require precise information that is often not available (e.g. I frequently refer to the key year 64, which in fact covers 30 August 683–17 August 684).

### Abbreviations

b. ibn (son of)

B. Bani/*Banw* (tribal)

C&Z (in footnotes) Crone and Zimmermann 2001

EI1 or EI2 *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, first or second edition

K. Kitâb

**(p.xx)** Reference abbreviations and spellings

See as follows:

A or AB under al- 'Awtabi *Ansâb* Mss.

*Bayân al-Shar'* under al-Kindi, Muhammad.

*Kashf; KD; KK;* under Sirhân b. Sa'îd and Note on Sources.

*K. al-Taqyîd* under Note on Sources.

*Muṣannaf* under al-Kindi, Aḥmad.

*Nahḍa* under al-Sâlimi, Muḥammad.

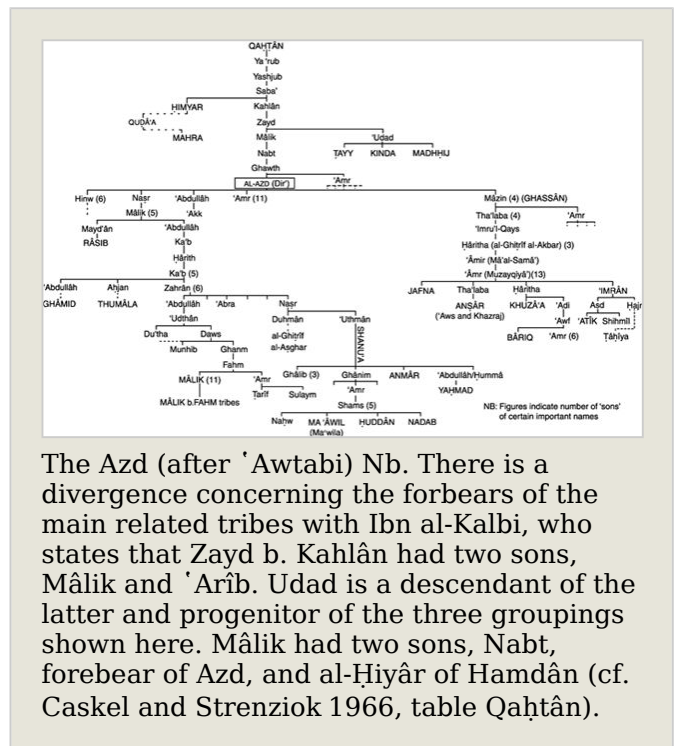
*Qâmûs al-Sharî'a* (abbr. *QS*) under al-Sa' di.

*al-Ṣaḥîfa al-Qaḥṭâniyya* (abbr. *SQ*) under Ibn Ruzayq.

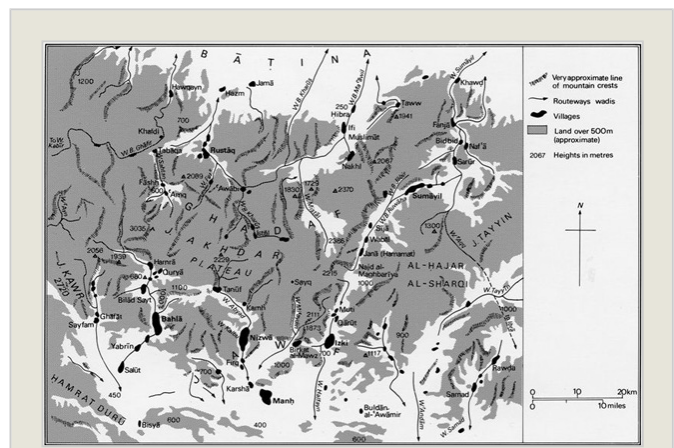
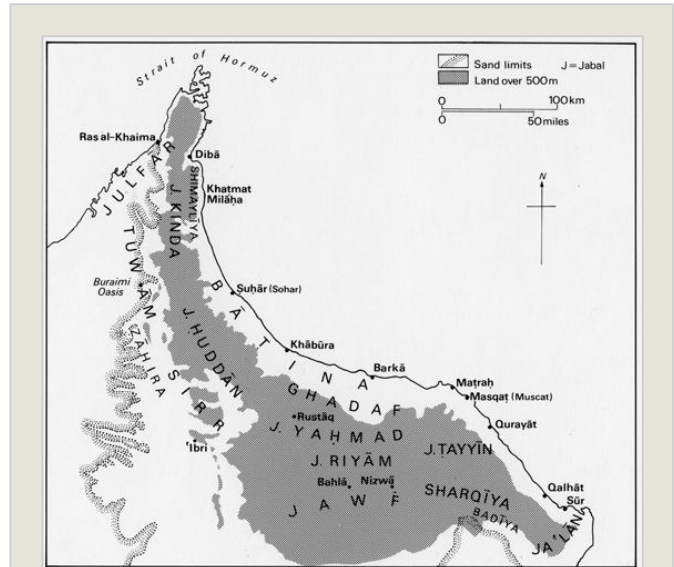
*Tuḥfa* under al-Sâlimi, 'Abdullâh.

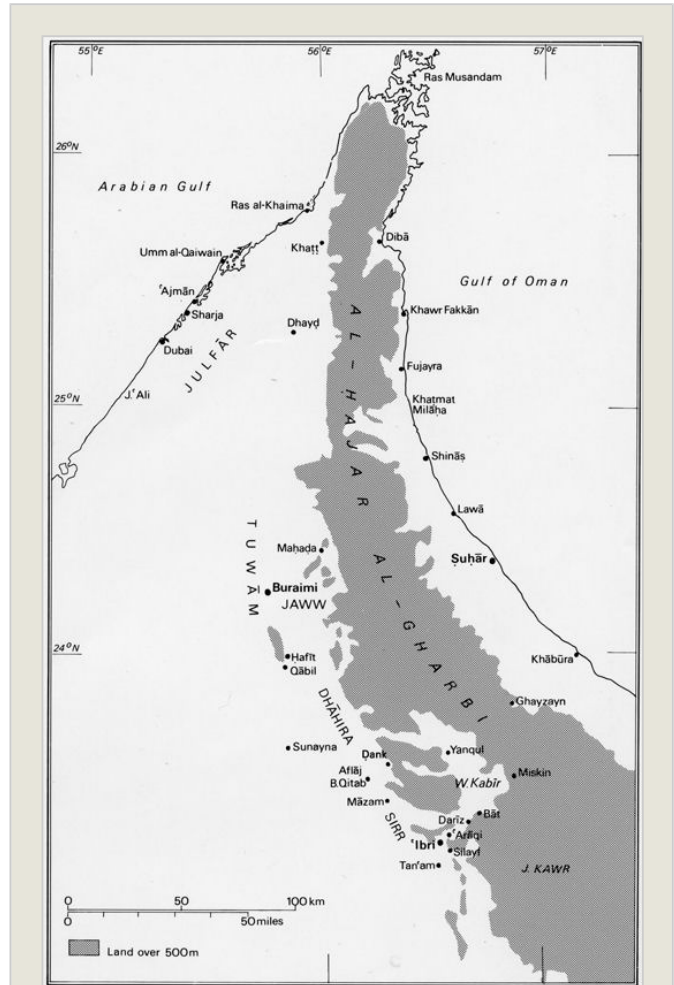
Al-Salmi is Dr Abdulrahman al-Salimi ('Abd al-Rahmân al-Sâlimi), who has used both orthographies for his name in English. I have retained the Al-Salmi form to distinguish him more easily from his great-grandfather 'Abdullâh b. Ḥumayd. **(p.xxi)**

**(p.xxii)**



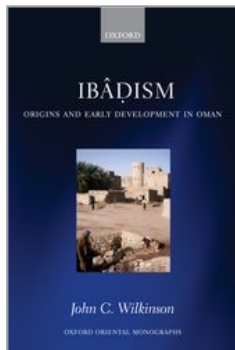
(p.xxiii) (p.xxiv)





Map 3. Northern Oman. (reproduced from Wilkinson 1987 by kind permission of Cambridge University Press.)

University Press Scholarship Online  
**Oxford Scholarship Online**



## **Ibâdism: Origins and Early Development in Oman**

John C. Wilkinson

Print publication date: 2010

Print ISBN-13: 9780199588268

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2011

DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.001.0001

### **(p.xxv)** Geographical Note

The names Yemen (al-Yaman), Oman ('Umân), and Bahrayn (al-Baḥrayn) are used to designate the three contiguous politico-geographic regions of the period. **'Greater Yemen'** extended from the mountainous corner of SW Arabia as far as Dhofar (Zafâr) to include the Hadramawt (Ḥadramawt) and 'Mahraland,' and largely corresponded with the area of the pre-Islamic Sabaeo-Himyarite state. **Greater Oman** centred on the 650 km-long mountain range in SE Arabia, whose 'marchlands' extended through the barren stone and sabkha desert towards Dhofar and along the Gulf coast towards the Qatar (Qaṭar) peninsula. What was then called Baynûna (western Abu Dhabi) separated it from **Greater Bahrayn** (NE Arabia), which extended to the confines of Iraq. Its core was formed by the oases of the Hasa (al-Aḥsâ) province (eastern Saudi Arabia), watered by springs rising from confined aquifers formed in the low-lying scarps of **Yamâma** (al-Yamâma) overlapping the old Arabian shield of the Najd (al-'Arûḍ), and which extend outwards beyond the coast at Qaṭîf into the Bahrein archipelago (Awâl).

**Oman.** I have generally used the old regional names then current in Oman for its principal regions (see Map 1).<sup>1</sup> Gharb and Sharq more or less designated the mountains and associated piedmont plains of the **Ḥajar al-Gharbi** and the **Ḥajar al-Sharqi** which hinge on the main central passage etched along the foot of the great central massif of the **Jabal al-Akhḍar**, generally referred to as the Sumâyil (Sumâ'il) Gap. These mountains were often designated by the name of the tribal groupings that dominated the different sections in the same way many of the wadis took their names from individual tribes.

This arid range is of some considerable altitude (over 3,000 m in the Jabal Shams) and highly dissected, forming a natural protection for the settlements concentrated in the valleys and where the wadis break out towards the piedmont plain. But they also form an impediment, so that the main lines of trade and communication from the interior have to pass **(p.xxvi)** through three or four main strategic passages, dominated by well-fortified centres, whose control is essential for establishing regional and state power; lesser routes pass through the territory of the individual tribes. These natural defences are reinforced on the desert side by the formidable

bulwark of the 'Great Sands' or 'Empty Quarter', reinforced by huge extents of totally arid plains separating the core of the region from those of its neighbours.

Settlements in the interior are based on the famous *falaj* (pl. *aflâj*), an underground irrigation system better known as *qanat*, of great antiquity. Each *falaj* produces its own area of cultivation, and hence individuality, but many were constructed to form a knot of settlement which often divided into two main segments, Upper and Lower somewhere-or-other, which in turn formed the core of a region, generally commanding a passage through the mountains to the coast, whose name designated both the centre and its region. In order along the inland side of the mountains from the entrance to the Gulf these major regions were **Julfâr** (var. Jullafâr or Jurrafâr), followed by **Tuwâm** (Tu'âm), later known as the Jaww, which commanded the landward side of an important passage via the Wadi Jizzi to the Batina coast at Sohar (Şuĥâr). Then came the **Sirr**, centred on settlements around and behind 'Ibri (but with Yanqul and the Wadi Dank an important subsidiary region) and with a passage across the mountains to its port at Khabûra. Julfâr thus presented the only link of weakness in the natural defences of central Oman, offering a line of advance for an invading force along the western piedmont zone, which is well developed in the north as far as the Sirr.

The central region, the inner keep of Oman designated the **Jawf** (Map 2), was protected from this potential line of invasion by the extraordinary bloc of the Jabal Kawr and extensive foothills, and from the rear by the main massif of the Jabal al-Akhḍar. Three major fortified centres commanded the settlements in the main wadi systems draining from the central plateau of the massif, **Bahlâ**, **Nizwâ**, and **Izki**, the last sited at the entrance to the central passage of the Sumayil Gap. This was strategically commanded by **Sumâyil** (Sumâ'il) itself, which also controlled a subsidiary passage via the Wadi 'Aqq direct to the **Sharqiyya**. In the period with which we are mainly concerned before the major development of **Qalhât** on the SE coast, the settlements of the Sharq were much more orientated towards central Oman and the two principal ones, **Ibrâ** and **Samad (al-Sha'n)**, really formed part of the Jawf and its politics. The regional toponym **Ja lân** covered a wider area than it does today and incorporated much of SE Oman, with a passage to the eastern coast where Qalhât developed a new importance at the end of the 6/12<sup>th</sup> century: the southern coast, open to the full monsoon blast, is of little importance. Rainfall in this region is generally more unreliable but the mountains (**p.xxvii**) nevertheless contained numerous scattered settlements in the Wadis Ṭayyîn, B. Khâlid etc., while the drainage of the Wadi Baḥḥâ allowed a considerable area of cultivation in the area, today designated by the Bilâds B. Bû 'Ali and B. Bû Ḥasan.

The main coastal settlement is formed by a remarkable strip of virtually continuous cultivation irrigated by wells along the shores of the **Batina** (al-Bâṭina) plain. This gives out at its lower end where the mountains came down to the sea beyond the mouth of the Wadi Sumâyil in the present-day Muscat capital area, and extends to the north, beyond Sohar, where it finally peters out in the Shimâliyya on the eastern side of the Musandam Peninsula, whose formidable inlets and coves have provided settlements of strategic importance round the entrance to the Gulf and sometimes served as lairs for piracy. In our period of interest Muscat was of little importance and the main fortified port was at **Damâ**, near the mouth of the Wadi Sumâyil system, while **Sohar** (Şuĥâr) was the great international Omani port for Indian Ocean trade.

---

In the mountain hinterland of the lower Batina lies an area of the greatest importance, the equivalent on the Gulf of Oman side of the Jawf, and also well protected by a natural zone of foothills, reinforced by its great forts, but nevertheless open to attack if a serious invading force arrives from the coast. This I have designated by a local name, the **Ghadaf**, the outer side of a shield whose inner side is the Jawf. Its main centre is **Rustâq**, strategically placed to control the main passage to the coast and the interlinking zone of narrow outwash fans that lie between the main range and the foothills, formed by the Wadis B. Ghâfir, Sahtân, B. 'Awf, and B. Kharûş; the upper reaches of the Wadi B. Ghâfir also provide a strategic link towards the principal pass across the mountains between the Sirr and the Batina. Behind, this narrow zone of coalescing outwash fans, whose development is constrained by the foothills, lies the main range of the Jabal al-Akhḍar. Here, the headwaters of these wadis have cut through the limestone carapace by impressive gorges, which often open into bowls eroded into the soft geological core of the Jabal, in a way which is rare on the Jawf side and absent along the continuous towering range which overlooks the Sumâyl Gap. These upper valleys form the heart of tribal *dârs* (territories, cf. *dîra*) from which precipitous paths rise to the central plateau, and thence, by generally somewhat less steep tracks, descend the dip slope towards the Jawf. From the Wadi B. Kharûş access is thus possible across the plateau of the Jabal al-Akhḍar towards the Nizwâ area, while the deeply incised Wadi B. 'Awf, which links into the 'Amq bowl carved out by the Wadi Sahtân below the formidable Jabal Shams, provides a limited passage across the mountains to the Bahlâ-Ḥamra area via Bilâd Sayt. Apart from Rustâq, two other important fortified centres exist in the region, **Sawni** (now called 'Awâbi) and **Nakhal**.

**(p.xxviii)** But it cannot be emphasized too much that all these transmontane passages over and through the main range are purely of concern for local tribal politics and impossible to follow by an invading force aiming for the Jawf, even with local complicity. The few successful incursions inevitably follow two lines of weakness, the passage along the western side of the mountains from Julfâr (and perhaps subsidiarily via the passage behind Sohar to Tuwâm), or via the Sumâyl Gap.

The main **economy** of the interior is based on agriculture and pastoralism, small livestock in the mountains, mixed with camels on the plains, and pure camel herding in the outer desert. Virtually all reliable fresh water is used for cultivating the date palm: on the coast agriculture is supplemented by fishing. The main pearl banks were in Bahrayn waters and those east of Qatar of little importance until the nineteenth century. Mining for copper was still of some importance in the Sohar hinterland in our period, and there are records of mines operating elsewhere.

So the insularity and autonomy of the mountain core with its ancient settlement pattern reinforces a strong sense of regional identity among its inhabitants, but at the same time the highly fragmented settlement pattern encourages a fissiparous tribal structure. In contrast to the isolation of the interior, the main coast was strategically sited to profit from the maritime circulation patterns of the Indian Ocean, largely dictated by the seasonal monsoon, and whose markets were dominated by the lands of the 'Eastern Caliphate'. That focus of trade in turn reinforced a natural geographic divide, with Julfâr orientated towards the Gulf and the Persian Coast opposite, and Tuwâm finding outlet both northwards to Julfar and to the Batina at Sohar, thus reinforcing its pivotal role as the northern gateway to Oman proper (see Map 3). The trade of central Oman was orientated entirely towards the ports of the Batina coast.

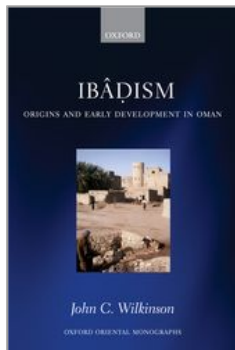
Understanding the nature of the dichotomy between the interior and the coast is essential for a comprehension of the geopolitics of Oman and the relations with outside powers. The interior needed the outlets of the coast. No trade or regular movement of people from Oman (other than migration drifts) passed by land: always by sea. This was reinforced by the fact that the main agricultural product is the date, pure sugar, a valuable source of nutrition but incapable of forming a proper diet. The essential exchange was for grain and the main trade was with India. A further factor is that Oman traditionally is not economically self-sufficient. Like the Hadramawt and the Mzab, where Ibâdism also took root, seasonal or long-term migration was often necessary, and commerce essential. Trade networks characterized all three places, and this exposure to the outside world is not only a feature Ibâdism had to come to terms with, but in fact formed an essential element in its spread. On the other hand, it was only the commercial importance of the coast that really interested outsiders. **(p.xxix)** They were not concerned with the interior so long as the Omanis left them in control of the main entrepot; and in any case they were incapable of occupying the mountain core for long. It was the changing equilibrium between the political strength of central authority in Oman and the occupying authorities or their vassals on the coast which drove what I have termed the Imamate cycle. Command of the coast generated wealth that opened up the latent divisions in society, a tendency towards dynastic power and tensions which increasingly found outlet in succession disputes. The difference from the classical Ibn Khaldûnian cycle was that the Imamate was never designed around a true *ḥaḍar* society with an administrative class and standing army. Rather, its ideology was rooted in tribal *badw* notions translated into Islamic terms and viscerally opposed to the development of a centrally administered empire.

Notes:

(1) Much of the toponymy of northern Oman changed with the influx of more modern immigrants (cf. Ch. 13). Thus al-Baynûna exists only vestigially as part of western Abu Dhabi, Jullafâr/Jurrafâr disappears along with the old tribal names of the Jabals Kinda and Ḥuddân, as too Tu'âm/Tuwâm. The name of al-Zâhira (Dhahira) now appears as a regional term for the area between Tu'âm and SIRR. The oasis area of Tu'âm itself becomes Jaww (Buraimi oasis is a European designation), and SIRR similarly disappears, more or less to be replaced by its main centre, 'Ibri. These old regions were probably the basis for the administrative provinces of the First Imamate.



University Press Scholarship Online  
Oxford Scholarship Online



## Ibâḍism: Origins and Early Development in Oman

John C. Wilkinson

Print publication date: 2010

Print ISBN-13: 9780199588268

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2011

DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.001.0001

### (p.xxx) A Preliminary Note on Omani and Ibâḍi Sources

#### I. Primary Sources

Virtually all the primary Omani sources are discussed in the text, and further details are given in the References. Further reference may be made to the excellent three-volume bibliography of M. H. Custers (2006). However, to aid the reader, a list in rough chronological order of the principal contemporary written sources follows.

#### 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> century Hijra before the definitive establishment of the Imamate in Oman

Ibn Ibâḍ; Jâbir b. Zayd (d. 93); Ḍumâm b. al-Sâ'ib; Abû Nûḥ Şâlih b. al-Dahhân; Sâlim b. Dhakwân; al-Ḥâjib al-Ṭâiy; Abû 'Ubayda; Shabîb b. 'Aṭiyya; al-Rabî' b. Ḥabîb (d. c. 170); 'Abdullâh b. Yazîd al-Fazâri; Hârûn b. al-Yamân.

#### Late 2<sup>nd</sup> to Late 3<sup>rd</sup> Century

##### (a) Basrans during the time of the setting up of the First main Imamate in Oman

Wâ'il b. Ayyûb al-Ḥaḍrami; Abû Sufyân Maḥbûb b. al-Ruḥayl; Abû Şufra Mâlik b. Şufra.

##### (b) Omanis from the period of the First Imamate before the civil war

Mûsâ b. 'Ali (d. 231/844); Munîr b. al-Nayyir al-Riyâmi; Hâshim b. Ghaylân; Abû 'Abdullâh (Muḥammad b. Maḥbûb b. al-Ruḥayl d. 260/873); 'Azzân b. al-Şaqr (d. 268/881-2).

##### (c) Maghribi sources from the period of the Tahert Imamate

Ibn Sallâm; Hûd b. Maḥkam; the *Mudawwana*; Imam Aflâḥ b. 'Abd al-Wahhâb; Ibn Şaghîr (non-Ibâḍi).

##### (p.xxxi) Bridging First Imamate and the aftermath of the civil war

Abû'l-Ḥawâri; al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥawâri; Ibn Ja'far; Abû'l-Mu'thir; Bashîr b. (Abû 'Abdullâh)Muḥammad b. Maḥbûb; Abû Qaḥṭân Khâlîd b. Qaḥṭân.

Many authors are considered from the ensuing period but the most important discussed are:

**Oman: Proto-Rustâq and Nizwâ parties (early to mid-4/10<sup>th</sup> century)**

Abû Sa'îd al-Kudami; Ibn Baraka; al-Bisyâni

**Oman and Hadramawt 5/11<sup>th</sup> century**

Abû Ishâq Ibrâhîm b. Qays al-Ḥaḍrami; Abû Zakariyyâ' Yahyâ b. Sa'îd (d. 472); Muḥammad b. Ibrâhîm al-Kindi (*Bayân al-Shar'*, d. 508/1115); al-'Awtabi

**Oman 6/12<sup>th</sup> century to early 7/13<sup>th</sup> century**

Ahmad b. 'Abdullâh al-Kindi (*Muṣannaf* d. 557/1162); Ibn al-Nazar; al-Qalhâti

**Maghrib 5/11-6/12<sup>th</sup> centuries**

Abû Zakariyyâ' Yahyâ; Abû'l-'Abbâs Aḥmad al-Nafûsi (d. 501/1111); Abû 'Ammâr 'Abd al-Kâfi (first half of 6/12<sup>th</sup> century); Abû Ya' Aqûb Yûsuf b. Ibrâhîm al-Warjlâni (d. 570/1174).

**II. Manuscripts and Other Unpublished Sources**

Virtually all manuscripts extant in Oman date to copies made at the earliest in the 10/16<sup>th</sup> century and proliferate with the Ya'rubi Imamate in the next. As far as I know, no original early manuscripts of any important works survive. The records make clear that much was destroyed wilfully, while others, like the originals of the *Bayân al-Shar'*, *Muṣannaf*, and *K. al-Istiqâma* were among 9,370 manuscripts destroyed by a terrible fire in Rustâq in 1721.

**K. al-Taqyîd**

A special word, therefore, needs to be said about a manuscript in the al-Sâlimi library called the *K. al-Taqyîd*, of which I was given a photodisc (p. xxxii) by Dr Al-Salmi. It is a complex work of 431 pages and the application of the title to the whole, as on the flyleaf, is something of a misnomer; there is also confusion between the owner and copier and the original compiler or transcriber. Basically it seems to be a *ḥifẓ* of the highly influential scholar Ibn Baraka referred to by the '*ulamâ*' as Abû Muḥammad (see Chapter 12). The introduction (p. 3), coupled to the final colophon, indicates the manuscript was bought unbound by its owner 'Umar b. Sa'îd b. 'Abdullâh, etc. for the enormous price of 2,400 dinars in Muharram 963 (December 1555). The same man says he transcribed it, and added to it what was available of the *K. al-Taqyîd* which is what Abû Muḥammad records (verb *qyd*) from his shaikhs, the Ruḥayli Imam Abû Qâsim Sa'îd b. 'Abdullâh (d. 328/939) and Abû Mâlik Ghassân b. 'Abdullâh b. al-Khiḍr. 'I copied it in my hand and joined it to this fine collection of vestiges (*manthûra*).'

An addition to the Anon. book list (see References) signals this title and clearly refers to the *Taqyîd* proper, for it comments that it is all from Abû Qâsim except for one response from Abû Mâlik. The actual *Taqyîd* features at pp. 316-22, and follows the well-known *Sîra* of Abû Qaḥṭân (pp. 282-315) whose colophon states it was copied in Shawwal 936 by 'Umar b. Sa'îd al-Bahlawi (this is probably an inversion of 936 for 963). After *tamma Kitâb al-Taqyîd* (without colophon), the manuscript reverts to the formula of the first part, 'I asked Abû Muḥammad'. The 'I' is not the expected al-Bisyâni, Ibn Baraka's most famous pupil, but a certain Abû 'Abdullâh Muḥammad b. Zâhir (p. 377), whose transmission seems to cover most of the rest of the manuscript. So the work as a whole appears to be essentially what Ibn Baraka collected or recorded, with a special section devoted to what he learnt from the Ruḥayli Imam.

Ibn Baraka was certainly a recorder of Ibâḍi tradition and 'Awtabi in the *Ansâb* says he wrote books of *taqyîdât wa masâ'il uṣûl al-dîn*; Barrâdi in his catalogue (item 18) also records his *K. al-Taqyîdi*. The Anon. book list has five works by him, including a *K. al-Iqlîd* and a *K. al-Sharḥ wa 'l-taqyîd*, and there is also a work called *Ma'rifat al-Â'imma bi 'Umân*. This manuscript is of the greatest interest since it includes a mass of early material, some of which seems to be unique. Two elements, the letter addressed to the people of Khawârizm and that to the Khurâsânîs, have been edited and translated by Al-Salmi in his Thesis. The work also includes large quantities of material from Abû 'Abdullâh, his son Bashîr, and a *Kitâb Abi'l-Mu'thir*; also important material from Omani 'ulamâ' of the 3/9<sup>th</sup> to early 4/10<sup>th</sup> century. It also quotes 2/8<sup>th</sup> century works from the Basrans. All or some of this could have originated with Ibn Baraka, but unfortunately there are clearly later glosses and anachronisms, notably from the oft-quoted *Ḍiyâ'* of 'Awtabi.

The final colophon is illuminating, albeit not totally clarifying. The (p. xxxiii) copyist (unnamed, but presumably 'Umar b. Sa'îd) says he finished transcribing it from the original in Jumâdi I 963 (March 1556), and states it was compiled by 'Abdullâh b. 'Umar b. Ziyâd b. Ahmad b. Râshid who says he made it for himself (the copyist adds an *Allah a'lâm*) in Rajab 625/1228 (that man's name also appears at the start of the work, but in a confusing way, almost as though it was from him that the manuscript was bought). In any case, it provides a useful *terminus ad quem* for the presence in Oman for certain works which I postulate were rediscovered around the period of Ibn Baraka.

It is a work that deserves a major study, and the above description is merely a tentative reconstruction of its structure and content.

#### **Abû Ishâq Ibrâhîm (b. Qays al-Hamdâni al-Ḥaḍrami)**

Another source of considerable interest seen recently is a polycopy, dated 1995 edited by Aḥmad b. Ḥumû, of the *K. al-Dalâ'il wal-Ḥujaj* by the Imam-to-be, Abû Ishâq Ibrâhîm b. 'Abdullâh (*sic*: clearly an error) al-Ḥaḍrami deriving from three Maghribi manuscripts, two at least of which are from the Mzab (one presumably Schacht's 1956 no. 24); see also Bar-râdi's catalogue (no. 22). The internal evidence of the *Dalâ'il* shows that the author was in Oman during the time of the Imam Khalîl b. Shâdhân (as does his *Dîwân*). It is also worth noting that although the early printed version (n.d.) of the *Dîwân* I used was from an Omani manuscript, the important biography it incorporates (dated 1906) by Sulaymân al-Bârûni (d. 1940) is clearly based, at least in part, on Maghribi material.

#### **Jâbir b. Zayd**

A considerable part of Chapter 6 is devoted to this key figure. Special mention however, must be made of an as-yet unpublished copy of eighteen of his letters, which again I have only recently been given sight of. A manuscript of eighteen of Jâbir's letters (fourteen addressees and one missing) was located at the Bârûni library in Jerba by Ennami who gave a brief description in his 1970 *JSS* article (item I-1) and also made some use of in his Cambridge Ph.D thesis (1971). The same MS was seen by van Ess in 1974 who published some further comments and suggestions in *ZDMG* 1976 with amendments in a *Nachträge* in *ZDMG* 1977 (essentially after seeing Ennami's thesis). Since then other manuscripts and typescripts have been found, all North African, but there is some confusion about their location and how many (for details see Custers (2006) under

Jâbir b. Zayd, Abû Dâwud, and Francesca); amongst them a typescript copy in Muscat (al-Maktaba al-Islâmiyya), which apparently was prepared by Ennami. The material I was shown seems to be a preparatory (p.xxxiv) edition based on this TS, plus the Mzab MS. However, it is difficult to be sure, since to some extent there is still something of a state of *kitmân* concerning the origins of such Maghribi material, possibly not unconnected now with the persecution of the Jabal Nafûsa Ibâḍis by Kadhdhafi.

From my (of necessity) somewhat cursory study of these letters I am sure they are essentially genuine and written, I believe, over the period approximately 70–90 AH. They are therefore of extreme importance, antedating our first unquestionably Ibâḍi source, **the *Sîra of Sâlim b. Dhakwân*** (Crone and Zimmermann 2001), to whom Jâbir addresses one of his epistles. Not only are they of great interest for the form of early legal opinions, but also because they throw some quite new light on Jâbir's politics and the activities of proto-Ibâḍis in Oman and perhaps elsewhere.

### Historical Sources

A brief survey of Mashriqi Ibâḍi historical sources may also be useful. Social and economic history, along with the evolution of Ibâḍi institutions, largely derive from the contemporary *fiqh* literature, and need no further discussion here.

There are essentially four sets of material for reconstructing the history of Ibâḍism itself and the Imamate in Oman. The first is the so-called *siyar* literature (see Chapter 12), which is important above all for theological debate. The extant material has been extensively surveyed by Dr Al-Salmi (Thesis 2001), some of which has just been published (2009b). This includes the valuable collection of material in the al-Sâlimi library. Twenty-four of the collection of *siyar* in the MNHC MS (now numbered 1854), entitled *al-Jawhar al-Muqtaṣir* from the opening work of Aḥmad b. 'Abdullâh al-Kindi (author of the *Muṣannaf*), and which I described first in *Arabian Studies* (Wilkinson 1978), have now been published in a two-volume edition (1986) edited by Dr Sayda Ismâ'îl Kâshif under the title of *al-Siyar wa'l-jawâbât li 'ulamâ' wa â'immat 'Umân*; but it also contains many other important items, unpublished, so far as I know. It is worth noting that a similar sort of *siyar* collection of forty items dating to 1131/1719 existed in the library of Muhammad al-Bârûni, who let Z. Smogorzewski copy it in Egypt in 1914 (in 1913 he was refused access to material in the Mzab). It was deposited in the Lwów library, and used extensively by Lewicki. Dr Savchenko kindly gave me a microfilm copy, which I subsequently deposited with many other works at Exeter University Library: its content as listed by Al-Salmi (Thesis 2001) is reproduced in Custers 2006: i. 72. Custers also lists (vol. i under Anon.) several other collections of this *siyar* literature, including the Hinds xerox in Cambridge University Library, which Crone and Zimmermann (2001) (p.xxxv) used for their major study of the *Sîrat Sâlim b. Dhakwân* and which also incorporates a critique of early sources.

The second is political history that occurs in *fiqh* literature, notably on the subject of *walâya wa barâ'a* and on the institutions of the *imâma*. Particularly important is chapter 68 of the *Bayân al-Shar'*. Much also derives from the polemics of the so-called Rustâq and Nizwâ parties concerning the deposing of al-Salt b. Mâlik in 272/886.

The third is tribal history, by far and away the most important work being the *K. Ansâb al-'Arab* of Sal(a)ma b. Muslim al-'Awtabi. There is considerable debate about whether this is the same as the author of the *Ḍiyâ'* (see Chapter 12) whose *floruit* was the second half of the 5/11<sup>th</sup> century to the start of the 6/12<sup>th</sup>, and if different the *Ansâb* probably dates to a century earlier. It is a unique source for the history of the pre-Islamic migration of the Arab tribes to Oman, their settlement pattern, relations with the Sasanids, their role in early Islamic history, and the events that led to civil war following al-Ṣalt's deposing. It also has some biographical details, and is particularly valuable for the Muhallabids; this section has been translated with valuable annotations by Martin Hinds (1991). Unfortunately, the extant manuscripts all clearly derive from a single surviving copy, which was highly deficient in those very sections that would have provided most interest, concerning the Azd. I have used two manuscripts (see References), that of Paris dated 1115/1703, which I label A, and that of 1089/1678 (ex *libris* Jâ'id b. Khamîs al-Kharûṣi 1734/5-1822) taken in Qatar from a refugee of the so-called Jabal War and now in Durham, which I label AB. A two-volume edition based on these two manuscripts has recently been edited by Iḥsân al-Naṣṣ, but I have made no effort to correlate my references with it. It is, however, not hard to cross-check, for the entries are usually found under the name of the tribe concerned.

The fourth is a hodge-podge of miscellaneous information recording dates, brief biographies, teacher lines, certain events, and so on, often simply a recycling along with errors. Such are the MNHC MS which I call Anon A; the composite MNHC MS 2424; the list of Imams added to a copy of Book X of the *Muṣannaf* dated 1078/1667; chapter 39 of the *Kashf* (see below); also a list of early books (down to Qalhâti) added to Book 72 of the *Bayân al-Shar'*, and which may be compared with al-Sâlimi's *Lum'a* (1905). Much of this material is also recorded in volume viii of al-Sa'di's *Qâmûs al-Shar'î*, itself largely deriving from the *Minhaj al-Tâlibîn* of Khamîs b. Sa'îd al-Shaqṣi, the power behind the restoration of the (Ya'âruba) Imamate in 1624, and a work by his contemporary, 'Abdullâh b. Muḥammad al-Khursîni (sp?) al-Nizwi, who was Nâṣir b. Murshid's qadi at Samad al-Sha'n. These works themselves in turn largely stem from the *Sîra Ibn Maddâd*, apparently by Muḥammad b. 'Abdullâh (p. xxxvi) b. Maddâd (d. 917/1511-12; it seems to be his father 'Abdullâh who decreed the confiscation of Nabhâni property in 887/1482). I have only very recently seen a copy of this (made by an Umbû/Ambû Sa'îdi of Nizwâ dated 1131/1719) from the al-Sâlimi library. The actual authorship is unattributed, as too is that of another MS from the MNHC library printed in 1984 (with absolutely no details of date or copyist), but both appear to be the same work as the Lwów MS *Siyar al-'Umâniyya* which Smogorzewski (1927: 55) states is by this author, and which coincidentally (?) is of the same date as that in the Sâlimi library. There are some interesting differences between the two Omani versions, but it is difficult to know how far this is due to slovenly editing by someone who clearly knows nothing about Oman (as so often with these early MNHC publications). But it should be noted that the most important primary source for the Basran period is Abû Sufyân's son, Abû 'Abdullâh. Since I have only seen Ibn Maddâd's work recently I have tended to quote the later sources for biographical material.

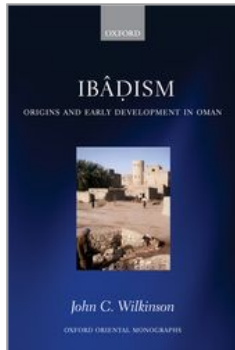
The sketch of actual Imamate history in a sort of thin narrative line seems to have followed a similar process of recycling, with each author adding his quasi-contemporary period. Certainly records of some sort must always have been kept concerning elections and deaths, while

attempts from the 4/10<sup>th</sup> century to record their history is apparent from the title *Ma'rifat al-'Ā'immabi 'Umân* of Ibn Baraka (not seen; for details see Custers 2006: i. 149). The best-known composite narrative is that of the historical chapters in the *Kashf al-Ghumma*, above all to English speakers since it was partially translated by E. C. Ross (1874) as *Annals of Omân*. Less well known is his 1873 analysis of chapter 29 (also used by Cuperly 1984 for the Omani 'aqîda), or that of E. Sachau (1898 and 1899) who made an extensive survey of the *Anshauungen* of the Ibâḍis in Oman and East Africa based primarily on chapters 27, 29, and 40 of a copy obtained by W. Rössler (the Germans took an interest as a result of their occupation of Zanzibar mainland territory in the 1880s), as well as the important annotation of chapter 33 from the Berlin MS by Hedwig Klein (1938, 'Ich, Hedwig Klein, Judin ...'). The complete *Kashf* is a huge work, of which the historical section is but a small part, a compilation made by Sirhân b. Sa'îd of Izki. Rawas (2000) has traced one of his descendants who told him his dates were 1650–1737 and that he started it when he was 25 years old: I have found traces from the Izki Falaj book (c. 1825) of the family, who were from the Umbû/Ambû Sa'îd, a clan very much involved in contemporary Imamate events. While his family background may explain why he assembled such a work, it remains no more than a compilation, much of which can be identified as being lifted, often word for word, from earlier works, notably al-Qalhâti. The history he records (down to 1728) is continued by later authors like al-Ma'wali (p.xxxvii) (*Qiṣaṣ wa akhbâr*), who takes the story down to the end of Ya'âruba times and then by Ibn Ruzayq who continues to the death (1856) of Sayyid Sa'îd b. Sulṭân; this last work is again a source for English speakers since it was translated by Badger (1871). Often with elaborations of dubious historical veracity, and like his huge compilations the *Ṣahîfa al-Qaḥṭâniyya* and the *Ṣahîfa al-'Adnâniyya*, it is little more than plagiarism and only really of value for quasi-contemporary events and personalities, *faute de mieux*. For the period under consideration none of these late historical narratives provides material of any unique interest, and they frequently distort the original texts from which they have been derived.

### **The Tuḥfa**

In any case, it has all been picked up in the great historical study for our period, volume I of the *Tuḥfat al-'Ayân bi sîrat ahl 'Umân* of 'Nûr al-Dîn', 'Abdullâh b. Ḥumayd al-Sâlimi. Although written as an inspiration for the *nahḍa* and but one of many works (at least twenty-two) by this prodigious blind scholar (1868–1914), who was largely responsible for restoring the Imamate in 1913, it incorporates everything the author could find relative to the history of the Imamate, warts and all. It is a work of immense scholarship. To take as an example, there is virtually nothing I found in a fairly thorough study of the chapter on the Imamate in the *Bayân al-Shar'*, which is not in the *Tuḥfa*. While al-Sâlimi tries to make sense of what he has compiled, he rarely attempts to interpret it and its immense value lies in the fact that he records what he has found and leaves the reader to judge the merits or otherwise of the Omani Imams. There are small errors, and some of the notoriously difficult chronology of the 'Second Imamate' can be shown now as faulty (see Chapter 11), but it must remain the standard work of reference. It may be assumed that the general line of historical narrative concerning the Imamate in Oman that I have not specifically referenced derives from it. (p.xxxviii)

University Press Scholarship Online  
**Oxford Scholarship Online**



## Ibâdism: Origins and Early Development in Oman

John C. Wilkinson

Print publication date: 2010

Print ISBN-13: 9780199588268

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2011

DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.001.0001

## The Pre-Islamic Heritage: Yaman and Nizâr

John C. Wilkinson

DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.003.0001

### [–] Abstract and Keywords

This chapter outlines the importance of the tribal dimension in the origins of Ibâdism, demonstrating that its ideology found fertile ground amongst the Yamani tribes of Iraq following the defeat of their two great revolts against Umayyad authority and Hijazi hegemony, that of Ibn al-Ash'ath al-Kindi and Yazid b. al-Muhallab al-Azdi. Using little known Omani sources and new epigraphic, archaeological, and linguistic evidence concerning pre-Islamic Arabia and the Sabaeo-Himyaritic state, it questions standard explanations concerning the origins of the Yaman-Nizar divide based on Ibn al-Kalbi's manipulations of genealogical history, notably with respect to the Azd diaspora and Qudâ'a. It demonstrates that there was a very real divide between the Northern and Southern tribes in pre-Islamic times which proved a highly significant factor in the political history of the Umayyad period in the ex-Sasanid lands.

*Keywords:* Yaman, Nizâr, Arabian epigraphy, Sabaeo-Himyaritic state, Ibn al-Kalbi, Marib, Tanûkh, Qudâ'a, Azd diaspora, Kinda

### Prologue: The Tribal Dimension

As will be shown in the course of this book, Ibâdism was the product of the Umayyad age. It was born of Mu'âwiya's bid for power against 'Ali and the famous arbitration agreement at Şifîn over which the Muḥakimma/Khawârij separated. That confrontation was essentially Syria against Iraq, or rather Kûfa. Kûfa was the *mişr* (garrison town) on which depended the rich agricultural lands of the central Sawâd where the Tigris and Euphrates approached each other, and its territory provided the wealth for the *muqâtila* (warriors) based there. Founded on the right (West) bank of the Euphrates, it was the first *mişr* in the Sasanid lands and its wealth had been distributed by 'Umar according to Islamic precedence (*sâbiqa*). It had had nothing to do

with Basra (al-Başra). That had been founded a little later to further the conquest into Iran, and like Kûfa, had been established on the edge of the agricultural area, not far from Obollah, the port at the head of the Gulf.

Basra was where the Gulf tribes settled. Its agricultural hinterland was the Shatt al-'Arab, Ahwâz, and Khûzistân, and its field of conquest Fârs, where the Gulf tribes had first campaigned from Tawwaj before being ordered to Basra by 'Umar. They were never involved in the Sawâd and had nothing to do with the rain-fed farming areas of the Jazîra and Syria to the north and west, culturally, economically, and politically a foreign land. They had belonged in pre-Islamic times to the Sasanid domain, not the Byzantine. They had not even taken part in the campaign in the Ahwâz-Basra area, and only arrived after the Iraqî conquest was complete. Their front of expansion then became southwestern Persia and the Southern side of the central Iranian desert, extending to Seistan (Sijistân/ Sîstân) and Khurâsân. What is more, they had no ambitions towards Kûfa, whose field of conquest was considerably more ungrateful than Basra's, once the initial favours of the Sawâd had been fully exploited. Central Iraq was in any case largely inaccessible and the approach was through the desert and steppe borderlands, the territory of the local **(p.2)** Tamîm and Bakr b. Wâ'il clans who had first conquered the Basra area. The former were enemies of the Yamani<sup>1</sup> Omani tribes in Basra, and the latter a part of the grouping of Rabî'a (Bakr b. Wâ'il and 'Abd al-Qays) with whom the Kinda and Azd had an ancient alliance that developed new dimensions in the crisis at Basra of 64AH (=684AD)

The fact that Tamîm and Bakr b. Wâ'il were settled in both *mişrs*, however, did provide a link as well as a common tribal dimension with Mecca and Madina. For the Gulf tribes the Hijaz was remote and the competition over the Caliphal succession of little direct concern, unlike the case of Kûfa. They certainly had no particular quarrel with 'Uthmân, out of whom they had done generally rather well. Tamîm, on the other hand had a close set of alliances with the Meccans from pre-Islamic times and were generally pro-'Ali, like the Kûfans who considered themselves wronged by 'Uthmân's administrative changes and patronage. Thus the Omani Azd and certain other clans of Basra rallied to 'Â'isha, ʿAlḥa and al-Zubayr when they advanced to Iraq after 'Uthmân's murder (Battle of the Camel) and in due course supported the Zubayrid anti-Umayyad Caliphate.

So at the time of the confrontation with Mu'âwiya, which saw the birth of the movement and in which Ibâḍism had its roots, the tribes of Kûfa were pro-'Ali. Rabî'a (who were not present in Syria) were his main protagonists, but he also had the support of Sa'd Tamîm, and the Yamani tribes based on the *mişr*, most important of which were Kinda and Hamdân. After the arbitration agreement, those tribes that had formed the core of 'Ali's military force and which had been on the point of defeating Mu'âwiya and his Syrians, stood down temporarily and were not involved with the secessionists (Khawârij) whose hard core held to their 'Muḥakkima' stance that God's law (*ḥukm*) was the only system of reference, and were finally massacred at Nahrawân and Nukhayla. Virtually all were Kûfans, of non-Yamani origins and of no tribal importance. Yet it was in Basra, not Kûfa, that the particular Muḥakkima ideology known as Ibâḍism 'hatched', to use their own metaphor, and it was to Yamani southern Arabia that the 'chick' first flew after it had developed political wings, finally to find a homeland in Oman. The movement's militants found fertile ground not in Tamîm, Shaybân, and Hanîfa, as the early Khawârij had done, but in the growing disaffection of the Yamani tribes in Iraq for the Umayyad regime and in particular



the government of Hajjaj (al-Ḥajjâj). This first manifested itself in the revolt of Ibn al-Ash'ath of Kinda, whose grandfather had dominated the political situation in Kûfa at the time of Siffîn, and then that of Yazîd b. al-Muhallab, whose father, in command of an essentially Omani army, had saved Basra **(p.3)** from the Azâriqa Khâriji extremists. After their defeat, Azd and Kinda began to make common cause.

So it was a joint Omani-Hadrami force, inspired by the Ibâḍi 'ulamâ' in Basra, which temporarily established a Kindi ('Abdullâh b. Yaḥyâ, known as Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq') as the first Imam in Hadramawt before marching on Yemen and the Holy Cities in 129–30/746–7. And the first missionary involved in the overthrow of Julandâ rule and the setting up of a line of Azd Imams in Oman, and who himself was nearly appointed Imam there, was a Kindi. The Azd-Kinda relationship is the key to understanding the activation of Ibâḍism in southern Arabia, and continued to play an important role in the history of the Imamate in Oman.

It will be noted that in this rather loose introductory overview the emphasis has been placed almost entirely on the tribal dimension. That is deliberate. The early Muslim conquests were about tribes, Arab tribes, and they dominate the whole picture of the Umayyad period, whether in the guise of individual clans, or in larger groupings like Azd, Rabî'a, Muḍar, or even Yaman and Nizâr. The Arabs were recruited by tribe, they settled in the *junds* and *amṣâr* by tribal *khiṭṭa*, and they went to the front as tribes: true, in ever bigger groupings, but nevertheless under their own tribal commanders. Of course they were also Muslims. That went without saying, but their religion was straightforward, a series of dos and don'ts, uncomplicated by theological or philosophic reasoning. It was a matter of obedience. Asked what he knew of the Qur'ân, the famous warrior 'Amr b. Abikarib (al-Zubaydi, of Madhḥij) replied that after being recruited from Yemen he had been much too busy fighting battles to study it.<sup>2</sup> That was the business of the *qurrâ*, the 'ulamâ', and the *fuqahâ*. The pious and learned performed the Hajj (*ḥajj*) and argued politics, the tribesmen performed *jihâd* as *muqâtila*. That is what they were there for, that is what they did best, that is what they were conditioned for.

Tribal *sharaf* ruled their lives, an honour and shame code which the older men who took part in the first *fitna* could remember when it had nothing to do with Islam. The close hand-to-hand fighting that took place around 'Â'isha's camel, in which the Omani 'Ataki leader was to the fore, had little to do with 'Uthmân's deposing, or the ambitions of al-Zubayr and Ṭalḥa; it was because the tribesmen were protecting the Mother of the Muslims and avenging her cause. Which is why 'Â'isha was so dangerous and had a lot to answer for over the senseless massacres she incited. Rallying to her rhetoric was much more comprehensible for the simple tribesmen than a quarrel over the succession to the Caliphate, although the concept of *Amîr al-Mu'minîn* as a quasi-military title did have some **(p.4)** meaning. Later, when Sabra b. Shaymân al-Ḥuddâni, then the leading Omani shaikh, gave refuge to Ziyâd (b. Abîhi) in Basra and a cool reception to Ibn al-Ḥadrami, it was less to do with loyalty to 'Ali's representative and more to do with tribal pique, because Mu'âwiya's agent had been instructed first to approach Tamîm before treating with Azd. And refuge once given was a matter of tribal honour, which transcended political considerations, a factor Ziyâd's son, 'Ubaydallâh, was to exploit again in the events of 64 AH.

Not only is understanding the tribal dimension essential for the history of the Umayyad period and the implantation of the first Imamates in southern Arabia, but also it is fundamental for any

---

comprehension of Oman where the Ibâdi Imamate periodically manifested itself until the middle of the twentieth century. The apparent opposition between State and Tribe is largely meaningless, and a ruler, whether Sultan or Imam, could not but agree with what the President of then Northern Yemen could still declare as late as 1986: 'The state is part of the tribes, and our Yemeni people is a collection of tribes.'<sup>3</sup> The Ibâdi code from the start found fertile ground in tribal and regional dissatisfaction among the Yamani tribes of southern Arabia, as too amongst the exploited Berber tribes on the western periphery of empire. Both had one common feature: while the populations accepted the message of Islam they rejected the authority of the Caliphate. Although their message was universal, in fact Ibâdi notions of a Muslim polity were essentially a translation into Islamic terms of traditional concepts of tribal authority, inherently opposed to the centralized power of Empire.<sup>4</sup>

In the case of North Africa, it was essentially a Berber rejection of Arab domination; in the southern Arabian situation it was resentment against the overweening Hijazis whose attitude is summed up in Mu'âwiya's invective aimed at the Gulf tribes. Had it not been for the Hijazis bringing them Islam they would still be Persian subjects, hirelings of the people they now rule, living their revolting life (so repulsive to a highlander) in the coastal plains, gaining their living from the sea or in the desert outback, excluded from the best territory by their Persian masters. Just how touchy the Omanis were about their pre-Islamic status is brought out by al-Muhallab's sole comment on the extremely laudatory letter from the people of Madina congratulating him on saving Basra from the Azâriqa extremists and which started '*yâ akhâ'l-Azd*': 'how crude the people of Hijaz are, they cannot even be bothered with trifles like my name.' He knew full well that the term Azd could be used as an insult by the likes of Hajjaj: 'the trouble with you is that you are an Omani and on top of that (p.5) you are an Azdi.'<sup>5</sup> So Ibâdism had its tribal dimension as did Şufrism, and the difference between them was much more to do with rivalry between Yaman and Nizâr (and in the Maghrib divisions between the Berber tribes) than it was about ideological differences, a fact superficially disguised by the apparent anomaly that nearly all the early heroes of the movement seem to be Tamîmis! Reconsidering the tribal dimension in the Khâriji revolts allows a somewhat novel approach to understanding the origins of the Ibâdi movement and when and where it activated.

But there is another very important common dimension to so-called Khâriji revolts and the tribal milieus in which its Ibâdi offshoot developed in Basra and Oman, the fact that the territories and peoples involved had been part of the Sasanid empire. As indicated by the Umayyads' insults, *grosso modo* the Arab tribes of the Hijaz and Yemen, along with whatever was left of the Hîmyaritic kingdom, had been independent of the two great empires, even though the *Abnâ'* were notionally Persian governors. To the north, Kalb and Quḍâ'a and other bedu tribes of the Syrian steppe had been nominally subject to Byzantium, for which they served as military auxiliaries (*foederati*). But in Oman and the coastlands of Bahrayn (al-Bahrayn = Greater Bahrayn = north-eastern Arabia) the tribes had formed part of the directly occupied Sasanid territories. The essential appeal of Islam was to throw off that dependence, and certainly in the early days the Gulf tribes profited, exploiting the sedentary subject peoples, in just the same way as did the rest of the Arab conquerors.

But at the same time, there was a certain empathy between the Gulf tribes and the subject peoples in the Sasanid territory, those who produced its wealth, the peasants, the sailors in the

---

'*Arḍ al-Hind*' maritime empire, the fishermen, the craftsmen, the merchants, the detribalized Arabs, peoples who did not participate in the Islamic campaigns and found themselves equally exploited and underprivileged under the new Arab elite. They too had formerly been a subject people, excluded from the best territory, nomads or sailors, some even peasants; groups of no social status in the Persian hierarchy. All Khawârij groups (as too the later Murji'a) exploited the resentment of this producing class on which the Arabs now lived ever more parasitically, by remitting their land and other non-Islamically prescribed taxes and to some degree breaking down social barriers. Which is why they were able to maintain themselves so successfully and for so long in various parts of Iran after they had disappeared from Iraq. Ibâḍism too largely evolved amongst the humble in Basra, and in due course something of that egalitarian spirit permeated the institutions and dogma of the Imamate and gradually resulted, admittedly **(p.6)** slowly at first, in a remarkable assimilation between the Arab and non-Arab populations in Oman. The tribesmen became villagers and the villagers tribesmen.

So just as we need to have a firm grip of the tribal dimension in the origins and spread of Ibâḍism and why it finally contracted into central Oman and a few isolated spots in North Africa, so we need also to understand the pre-Islamic status of the Arab tribes of Oman in the Sasanid territory called 'Mazûn'. In the present chapter, therefore, the pre-Islamic tribal dimension will first be discussed, with the focus of attention on the 'Yamani' tribes of southern Arabia. That of necessity takes us into the vexed question of Arab genealogy, but above all into the geographical and political relations that developed between various migration waves as they formed territories in the Arabian Peninsula in pre-Islamic times. It is an aspect that is largely ignored in traditional accounts, which so often seem to treat Arabic history as *ayyâm al-jâhiliyya*, of little importance and full of semi-mythical stories, albeit perforce paying some superficial attention to the clan structure of Quraysh and its alliances, as though Mecca and Madina had always been the *omphalos* of the Arabian world. Such accounts seem to consider tribal relations in the early Islamic period as an essentially contemporary product and their genealogies largely as fabrications, manipulations by the Kalb to reinforce the current political alignments of Yaman and Nizâr in Syria during the Umayyad period.

Fortunately, modern historians no longer see such a clear break with the pre-Islamic past, partly because there is an increasing awareness of continuity in change, and partly because sources from other than the Arabo-Islamic tradition have become available. Most important is the epigraphic material from Arabia itself, which has now provided a sufficient framework to appreciate Arab relations with Saba and Ḥimyar, and their role in the expansion of the South Arabian kingdom into central Arabia. This has shown that behind many of the stories and names in the genealogies lie elements of a real history, so that one of the main modern experts, Christian Robin, is able to write:<sup>6</sup> 'Avant la découverte des inscriptions qui les mentionnent, rien ne permettait de penser que ces divers personnages étaient historiques. Pourtant, les plus anciens sont antérieurs à l'hégire de 400 ans.' Through a study of these sources the Yaman tribes begin to take their proper place in Islamic history. Once we can understand the role of Kinda as quasi-independent rulers on behalf of Ḥimyar over the northern Ma'add, 'Âmir b. Ṣa'ṣa'a, and perhaps even Muḍar, we can perhaps appreciate why their delegations to the Prophet considered they were conferring the honour by offering to marry outside **(p.7)** their own blood-line,<sup>7</sup> or that ḥimyar itself had ambitions to form a new kingdom when they moved to Sham.<sup>8</sup>

## Yaman Versus Nizâr

The classical tradition: the *Jamharat al-Nasab* of Ibn al-Kalbi

The translation of tribal rivalries into the genealogical divisions of Nizâr and Yaman during the Umayyad period was part of a paradigm constructed by the Ibn al-Kalbis, father (d. 146/763 aged 80 or more) and son (c. 120-204 or 206/737-819 or 821). Although highly influential in Arab historiography, their work has been so ignored or mistrusted that when first studying the subject in the late 1960s I had to rely on manuscripts of Hishâm b. Muḥammad b. Sâ'ib al-Kalbi's *Jamharat al-Nasab*, fortunately in conjunction with the first serious study of the work in Western scholarship which W. Caskel and G. Strenziok had just published (1966) in tabular form, along with an important introduction and commentary, some of which also found its way into several influential articles in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. For these authors, the macro-scale relationships were to be construed as symbols of Arab unity in the face of party strife and the pressure of non-Arabs to acquire Arab status at the end of Umayyad times: the split between northern and southern Arabs, symbolized by Qaḥṭân and 'Adnân, Nizâr, and Yaman, was a deliberate creation for political ends. Like Wellhausen, sixty years earlier, they found no justification for such a division in pre-Islamic times: all that existed were tribal groupings that coalesced into larger confederations after the coming of Islam. The supporting genealogical theory derived essentially from the political situation in two main areas: in Syria, where the rivalry between Qays and Kalb burst into flames at the Battle of Marj Râhiṭ (64/684), and in Iraq, where one of the most active Yamani alliances was that of the Azd, themselves split into two groupings, Azd 'Umân (i.e. eastern) and Azd Sarât (western). The actual theory of the northern and southern divisions emerged as a result of the Ḥimyar of Ḥimṣ seeking to incorporate the Qudâ'a (from whom the Kalb) into their party.

Since that time, two others blocks of information have emerged which allow us to reassess that thesis, the epigraphic evidence and the Omani sources. However, before pursuing the subject further, it is necessary first to understand the essential rationale behind Arab genealogy.

### **(p.8)** The purpose of formal genealogy

One obvious aspect is functional, the organization of the tribes in the *ajnâd* and *amṣâr* and administration of the *dîwân* in the conquests, as too to distinguish! between the Arabs proper and those who sought to assimilate. The register started with 'Umar, but the upper echelons of genealogy must have become increasingly important as the tribes in Kûfa and Basra were bulldozed into ever larger settlement and military units. But the essential reasoning, I would suggest, was rather wider; to give identity to the Arabs at the time they adopted Islam. Rather in the same way as the Pentateuch and other 'historical' texts do for the Jews, it is a sort of Old Testament, linking historical and mythical events, figures, ethnic groupings, tribes, the northern and southern kingdoms, nomads and settled, into a structure which explains the identity of the Arab people and its history, as a community, a state, a nation. This had been developing since the start of the sixth century with the Arab alphabet and a cult of the epic *qaṣîda* poetry, probably encouraged by the opulent courts of the Naṣrid/Lak! hmid and Jafna/Ghassânid rulers of the Sasanid and Byzantine frontier states,<sup>9</sup> a sort of *retour aux sources*, bordering at times on folklore. But now it was complemented by Islam, which, in its early years, was almost a 'national' ideology, despite a supposed universal appeal. The coherence of this genealogical explanation of Arab identity depends entirely on the point of view from which it is regarded. For

the Arabs it was their pre-Islamic history; for outsiders it simply does not seem to stand up to any positivist historical analysis, any more than the Old Testament does to modern archaeological research. But that is to take a narrow view of history. Belief systems, whether religious or iconographic, are part and parcel of every day life as well as *histoire événementielle*. The interpretation given by those who record those events and how they do so have their own purpose, to explain the destiny of the peoples involved. Arab genealogy is a powerful tool and its rationalizations are not to be dismissed in terms of the current events that led to political strife between Nizâr and Yaman, even though that might explain part of the picture. The formal construct as presented by the Ibn al-Kalbis was based on a history as old as the Arab tribes themselves and had to make sense to them. Arab tribal identity with a notion of a common descent from Ismâ'îl/Ishmael goes back at least to the first century AD.<sup>10</sup> Tribal genealogy, real or fabricated, was a fundamental fact of political existence in the early Islamic period, and it therefore deserves a deeper study than it has generally has been accorded.

Equally important was that it placed the individual in Arab society. **(p.9)** Westerners tend to find identity in place; the Arabs of the Peninsula find it in clan and ask 'Who are you from?' rather than 'Where are you from?' So an Omani might belong to a tribe simply called the B. 'Ali, but he also knows that this particular 'Ali descends from the Sawd b. Hajar b. 'Imrân of the Azd, even though that is shorthand for a genealogical tree with many branches and that large numbers of the tribe are in fact of different origins: in all probability the eponym is, or was, that of the original shaikhly family or its nickname (*laqab*).<sup>11</sup> That is of little importance in Oman itself, for the genealogy is accepted amongst the tribes long settled there, and whether or not the individual is actually of the descent to which he identifies (*nasaba ilâ*), he has been incorporated into it and therefore belongs to the same *aşabiyya* (*shaff* as it is termed in Oman) which determines his relations with others. Which is why the same term *nasaba ilâ* is also used in Ibâdî literature for religious identity with the Qur'ân and the *ahl al-qibla*.

But once the tribesman goes abroad what matters is that he is from 'Imrân Azd: immediately there is a common tie when he encounters 'cousins' in Iraq who originated from the Sarât in western Arabia. While the reason the Omani group parted may have been some dispute, unless it was enshrined in some major feud, it mattered little compared with the enmity for say Sa'd Tamîm. Certainly the *akhmâs* system, which amalgamated many tribes of different origins into five great 'quarters' in Basra, might dictate new alliances and enmities, as too when fighting on the Khurâsân front, but equally it could reinforce the identity of the forebear Azd, which had its own *khums* and whose clans went to war as Azd. That in turn requires placing the Azd in a yet wider context; of understanding their relationship with other tribes, in particular with the Yamanis in Kûfa, also divided along tribal lines, but there amalgamated into 'sevenths'. Just as local Basran and Kûfan interests might override individual clan interests, so Iraqi and Syrian politics could nullify these wider tribal relationships. Yet the common Yaman dimension on both sides at the Şiffin confrontation was largely contributory to the halt in hostilities, for the tribes concerned were perfectly aware that they were being incited once again to fight each other, as in the bloody Battle of the Camel a few months before.

The danger for central government was that macro-scale tribal alignments within each province of the Arab empire might cut across regional interests to unite against a common enemy. Umayyad concern was to prevent Yaman in one place from making common cause with Yaman

from somewhere else, of the Kûfan Yamani joining those of Ĥimş, or the Azd in Basra Ibn al-Ash'ath. Their tactic was essentially to use patronage **(p.10)** to exploit internal rivalries and face Yamani against Yamani, the same tactics which pre-Islamic empires had used to maintain their authority in Arabia Deserta.

#### The descent group model

It is true that the switch of the Quđâ'a from Nizâr to Yaman in Syria seems to indicate that it was the tribes that created the higher echelons of genealogy, rather like the supposed descent from Yâs reinforces the tribal cohesion of the disparate clans that form the Bani Yâs in modern state formation of the Abu Dhabi-Dubai area. Similarly, polarization into balanced 'moieties' in time of crisis, as in Yaman and Nizâr which brought to an end the First Imamate in Oman, and the Hinâwi and Ghâfiri at the end of the Ya'âruba Imamate, is to be explained essentially in terms of political and territorial interests, as will appear in Chapter 11.

Nevertheless, the clan identity of the leading families in a region of clearly defined geographical identity like Oman remains a very real factor in determining tribal relationships and the associated 'ayb and *sharaf* (shame and honour) behavioural code. Much of modern anthropological work has been done with nomadic groupings whose formation is essentially fluid and opportunistic, whereas in the core of the Oman region, where the settled Arab population has deep roots in the land and has its history recorded, the people know their genealogy and indeed need it to understand their place, 'timeless identities attached to territory', as Dresch puts it in connection with a not dissimilar situation in explaining the Hâshid and Bakîl alignments in Yemen.<sup>12</sup> True, general names of great groupings like B. Hinâ, B. Riyâm, B. Ruwâḥa today, or of B. Sâma or Mâlik b. Fahm in the past, do reflect a shifting resolution of clan and geographical interests, but they are basically labels, and the tribal name is only used formally as a *nisba* by those recognized as the shaikhly or former shaikhly families.

However, the coherence of these larger tribal confederations stems not from these shaikhs, but from the paramount leadership of what the Omanis call *tamîmas*, originating from families of ancient traditional authority. For example, in the case of the Riyâm, it is not the Awlâd Râshid [b. Sâlim b. Muş'ab b. Riyâm], recognized as the shaikhly clan from time immemorial, who head the confederation, but the Nabâhina,<sup>13</sup> who were the *mulûk* of Oman for several centuries before the restoration of the Imamate in the seventeenth century under the Ya'âruba,<sup>14</sup> and are of 'Atîk descent ('Imrân Azd). And the 'Atîk not only feature prominently **(p.11)** in early Omani history, but were the leading clan of the first Azd wave to come to Basra. Yet before taking control of the Riyâm early in the nineteenth century the Nabâhina had been *tamîmas* of the rival Ruwâḥa confederation, who now came progressively under the influence of the Khalîlis, a clan of the Kharûş and descendants of Imams of the First and Second Imamates who were evicted from Bahlâ by the Nabâhina (around 915/1510): prominent in the *nahḍa*, they produced the two main Imams of the twentieth century.<sup>15</sup> And the Kharûş are from a clan of the Yaḥmad (Azd Shanu'a) whose origins can be traced back at least to the early sixth century AD.<sup>16</sup> So it can be seen that the same names crop up in different guises throughout Omani history, and it is a fact that every single dynasty (Imamate or Sultanate) that has ruled Oman has been of Azd origins (Yaman) and the Imam makers from the B. Sâma (Nizâr).

So genealogy today is by no means a fiction in Oman proper, the core of the Ibâḍi state, although it is only vague in northern Oman and the bedu fringes where tribal mobility and new migrations have profoundly reshaped relationships (see Chapter 13). Genealogy establishes a person both in the geography and history of the country, as well as in the wider Arab world, and represents a genuine continuity between the present and the period covered by this book. So, however thorny the thicket, and however tedious the subject, comprehension of the structure of those Yaman tribes which primarily concern us, their geographical distribution, alliances, and feuds at home and abroad, is a prerequisite for understanding how and why Ibâḍism implanted itself in southern Arabia and why, at the end of the 3/9<sup>th</sup> century, Oman foundered in a civil war that led to the political and ideological divorce between its northern and central regions. The roots of that complex history are found in the story of the pre-Islamic migrations and settlement of the tribes concerned.

#### Northern and southern Arabs: the epigraphic evidence<sup>17</sup>

The epigraphic evidence certainly calls into question the assertion that there was no animosity between the northern and southern Arabs in pre-Islamic times, and in fact reinforces the evidence in the written historical material. The divide between the tribes of the Sabaeo-Ḥimyaritic domain in southern Arabia and the tribes of central and northern Arabia is **(p.12)** clearly brought out by the history of Ma'add, who features in the genealogies as the son of 'Adnân and thus the progenitor of the 'northern' Arabs. His son's son, Nizâr, included the eponyms of three famous groupings, Rabî'a Muḍar, and Iyâd. From the first stem 'Abd al-Qays and Bakr b. Wâ'il; from Muḍar two great groupings, those descending from al-Yâs (Hindif), to which Quraysh belong, and from the sons of al-Nâr, known as 'Aylan, Qays (whence Qays 'Aylân).

Ma'add first features in 328 AD in the famous North Arabian Namâra funerary inscription of the Tanûkhid Imru l-Qays b. 'Amr, King of all the Arabs, who subjected the two Asd/Azd, Nizâr, and their kings, who dispersed Madhhij, laid siege to Najrân, and brought into submission Ma'add; who distributed the authority of the tribes among his sons and organized them as a cavalry corps for the Romans. Three initial points may be made. First, that Nizâr already has a separate identity from Ma'add and is clearly a large grouping with its own 'kings'. Second, as Shahîd points out,<sup>18</sup> the scattering of Madhhij, the siege of Najrân, and the submission of Ma'add may all be part of a campaign or campaigns to the south-west and centre of Arabia. Third, that the one tribal grouping which one would have geographically expected to find as a subject group is absent, Quḍâ'a. Which means that either they had not yet arrived, or they are incorporated into one of either Ma'add or Nizâr, if a 'northern' genealogy is favoured, or the two Asd/Azd if a 'southern'.

From the time of this submission, Ma'add was in almost continuous conflict with Ḥimyar who, from their capital at Zafâr in the southern Yemeni uplands, had finally taken control of Saba and Hadramawt and extended their power northwards, to incorporate the 'Asîr and the neighbouring tribes. The important Sabaic inscription ('Ab 1) from the 'Abadân valley of Hadramawt, dating to 470 Himyari (about 360), records how in a dozen previous expeditions led on behalf of Ḥimyar by the great Hadrami dynasty of the Yaz'anids, their power had been established over the Mahra as far at least as Damqawt (just west of the present Omani border), as too in the opposite direction against Murâd and Iyâd (then living in the Mecca region,

capturing their chief Tha' laba b. Salûl, who features in the genealogies), and also Asd/Azd. Their campaigns also extended into central Arabia, Kharj (Yamâma), where they took 3,200 camels and a handful of horses<sup>19</sup> from Ma' add, and also, apparently, an expedition from Mahraland to Yabrîn. Another expedition resulted in the defeat of the nomadic 'Abd al-Qays whose territory is described as **(p.13)** between that of Nizâr and Ghassân. This, and another inscription from about a century earlier, recording a mission to Ghassân, al-Asd (Azd), Nizâr, and Madhhij,<sup>20</sup> indicate that Ghassân, who lived on the Najd side of the uplands about the level of Mecca, was already apart from Asd/ Azd, who lived to the south of them, in the Sarât and the wadis draining towards the Tihâma coastal plain.<sup>21</sup> That confirms my own view that, although neighbours, Ghassân's attachment to Azd is remote, and the genealogy is little more than a vague claim to be related to the dynasty that became 'kings' of the Arabs in federation with Byzantium.<sup>22</sup>

Most interesting is the fact that the 'Abd al-Qays were defeated at a site identified with the Arabic al-Siyy, 410 km north-east of Mecca (where the Prophet fought the Hawâzin, 'mir b. Şa'şa'a in 8 AH), for it confirms the Omani sources which indicate that most of them arrived in Bahrayn after the Mâlik b. Fahm migration (see below). The inscription also validates the tribe's basic genealogical divisions, describing three groupings, Shann, B. Nukra (b. Lukayz b. Afşâ b. 'Abd al-Qays), and B. Şabîra (either a Shann or Nukra subdivisio n). The fact that they lost 400 captives, 4,000 camels, and 12,000 small livestock, compared with Ma' add, whose losses were almost entirely camels, makes it fairly clear that the 'Abd al-Qays were not pure camel-herders but practised the sort of mixed herding that characterized their territory in the outwash fans of northern Oman. So here again, in the case of Abd al-Qays as well as Iyâd, the inscriptions confirm major features in the genealogies of the tribes concerned.

Two major inscriptions at Ma' sal al-Jumh (215 km west of Riyadh) show how Himyarite power was established or re-established over central Arabia during the fifth and sixth centuries. Ry(ckmans) no. 509 celebrates the visit of the Himyarite kings, Abikarib As' ad and his son Yuha' min, to Mas' al (perhaps around 445) in the country ( 'rd) of Ma' add, adding to their existing titles of Kings of Saba', dhû-Raydân, Hadramawt, Yamnat, the Arabs of Twd<sup>um</sup> and Thmt. Robin<sup>23</sup> concludes that Tawd represented the uplands and the Najd shield and that Ma' sal al-Jumh was probably Ma' add's place of assembly. The Tihâma of that period, as also in early Islamic times, was the coast of Hijaz rather than of Yemen itself, and its Arabs Muḍar, whose 'capital' may have been Yathrib. This conquest was achieved with the Himyar kings' regular South Arabian troops, and 'their Arabs'. This is the first time that these two groupings are placed more or less on a par; and as a result the Kindi dynasty of Ḥujr b. 'Amr (Âkil **(p.14)** al-Murâr,<sup>24</sup> 450-75) was given the rule over the Arabs of central Arabia.<sup>25</sup> Kinda (Kiddat of the inscriptions) had originally been incorporated in the Sabaeen domain when Sha'îr Awtar (the Arabized form of his name, 210-30 AD) dealt with the Arabs that had been harrassing the incense route, in two expeditions against Qryt<sup>mdht</sup> Khl<sup>m</sup>, identified as the archaeological site of Qaryat al-Fâw, dominated by Madhhij in the first century and Kinda in the next. Situated some 85 km north-east of Najrân, this was located not only on the inland incense route that then passed by Shabwa, which Sha'îr Awtar destroyed about 230,<sup>26</sup> but in strategic control of the main route from south-west Arabia to central Arabia (the Najd and Yamâma), and thence eastwards to Bahrayn or northwards towards Iraq.<sup>27</sup> This was also the line of migration followed by many of the tribes with which we shall be concerned, and the direction in which the Kinda

---



expanded their own power. The Kinda also had independent access towards Hadramawt, and this too was to play a role in their expansion and finally settlement there. Sha'îr Awtar's conquest at Qaryat al-Fâw was celebrated with an inscription which describes its king as 'Rabî a, of the lineage of Thawr, king of Kinda and Qaḥṭân'. That, once more, confirms the realities of the genealogies where Thawr is the name of the Kinda progenitor, whose descent stemmed from his marriage with a 'granddaughter' of Rabî'a. The fact that the inscription associates Kinda with an historic Qaḥṭân also shows that the forebear of the southern Arabs is not a fiction. Furthermore, an inscription concerning a subsidiary campaign against a tribe described as allies of Thawr and Qarya is perhaps identifiable with Asd/Azd;<sup>28</sup> which in turn would indicate the Azd-Kinda alliance went back to the earliest Arab times.

There are several references to these ancient pacts and sub-pacts of the southern Arabian tribes in the Arab sources. Dînawari states the Rabî'a-Qaḥṭân alliance against their mutual enemies, above all Tamîm, dates to the year 6 of Malkikarib's reign, while Hamdâni also describes it in a slightly different version. It was renewed in an Islamic guise by 'Ali at Kûfa in his confrontation with the Syrians. Similarly there were pacts between the Rabî a and Kinda, and the Bakr b. Wâ'il against the Taym.<sup>29</sup> The close association of Kinda and Rabî'a ('Abd al-Qays and Bakr b. Wâ'il) was particularly significant, for it was with Rabî'a that Ḥujr campaigned in Bahrayn and the two remained closely allied into Islamic times **(p.15)** (notably at Kûfa). It was also the grouping with which Azd associated in Basra. 'Abd al-Qays were already their old allies at home, while in the crisis of 64 Bakr b. Wâ'il approached Azd to renew the pre-Islamic alliance, which consequently played a role in the tribal *aṣabiyya* that reigned in Khurâsân (see Chapter 4). The importance of these Rabî'a alliances with the Yamani was such that the 'Abbasid Caliph al-Manṣûr determined to break them by appointing Ma'n b. Zâ'ida al-Shaybânî (Bakr b. Wâ'il) to Yemen with specific instructions to do so, and similarly appointing a Hinâ'i (Azd) reputed for his cruelty, 'Uqba b. Muslim, in charge of Yam âma, Bahrayn, and Oman, with instructions to do likewise, after his governor had been killed by the 'Abd al-Qays-Rabî'a. Both governors died assassinated, the one by two Yamani brothers from Hadramawt who came to Seistan, after Ma'n was appointed there, to avenge the death of their father during the massacres at Shibâm and Sûrân; the other at the hands of a man of Rabî'a. The Caliph's objective was nevertheless achieved, with the result that Nizâr-Yamani enmity reached its apogee in early 'Abbasid times.<sup>30</sup>

Since the early third century, therefore, Kinda had recognized Saba and subsequently taken part in the Ḥimyarite campaigns against Hadramawt. The destruction of Shabwa left a vacuum between Mârib and the new Hadrami centre of Shibâm in the Wadi Hadramawt proper, from which the Kinda profited to expand into upper Hadramawt, and notably its southern 'headwater' of the Wadi Daw'an (later the core of the Hadrami Ibâḍî state). Their presence there is attested at the latest by Abraha's inscription of 658 Him (543) in which Kinda is shown as leading a revolt of several tribes in southern Arabia. Even so, the location of an inscription of Ḥujr b. 'Amr (i.e. Âkil al-Murâr), 'King of Kinda', shows they continued to live in the area around Qaryat Fâw (itself abandoned by the fourth century),<sup>31</sup> and it was only after the collapse of their power in central Arabia that the Hadramawt became their main homeland (with an important division in Oman).

So with the establishment of the Kinda in central Arabia, Ḥimyar, like Byzantium and the Sasanids, had its own buffer Arab state and inter-Arab relations took on a new dimension. There

is some debate about whether Muḍar itself came under full Kinda control. A recently published Mas'al inscription<sup>32</sup> from around 445 indicates that the northern Hijaz was in relationship with both Byzantium and Ḥimyar and that Muḍar possibly recognized the Quḍâ'î Salîhid dynasty, which controlled the Byzantine Arabs. Their authority was replaced around the start of the **(p. 16)** sixth century by the Tha'laba, probably the Ghassânid Tha'laba from whom later stemmed the Jafnids, according to another inscription dating to 521.

Another important Mas'al inscription (Ry. 510), dating to June 521, was inscribed during the course of an expedition against Iraq where it seems Mudhahir/Mundhir (i.e. the Naşrid = Lakhmid ruler) had incited the Arabs of central Arabia to revolt. Once again, the Kinda feature as the leading Arab tribe, as they do when they head the list of tribes accompanying Abraha, the Christian Axumite king of Ḥimyar, in his campaign in the region around the middle of the century (Ry. 506),<sup>33</sup> when he dealt severely with the revolting Ma'add at Ḥalibân/Ḥulubân (about 100 km south of Mas'al) and the (Nizâri) 'Âmir (b. Şa'şa'a). In these operations in 'Âmiri territory, Kinda and 'Ula/'Ali formed one auxiliary force under the command of Abû l-Jabr, probably from a collateral branch of the Kindi royal family, al-Jawn,<sup>34</sup> and Sa'd and Murâd another. There is a general consensus that the latter are Madhḥij (who also feature in the 521 inscription), and that Sa'd is probably Sa'd al-Ashîra, rather than the Sa'd Tamîm as proposed by Kister, since they were fighting alongside and under the same commander as Murâd, the tribal 'son' of Madhḥij.

So both the epigraphic and literary evidence<sup>35</sup> clearly point to major conflict between the Ma'add and their associated (Nizâri/northern) tribes and the southern tribes, notably those of the Yemen periphery, Kinda (Hadramawt), Murâd (northern Jawf), and the Najrân region (Madhḥij, Sa'd and 'Ula). It shows Kinda was allied with Ḥimyar against the Ma'add and the Ḥujrids were appointed to rule over them; that al-Ḥârith b. 'Amr probably met his death at the hands of Kalb following the restoration of the Lakhmids (Mundhir III was almost continually at war with southern Arabia); it is evident too in the widespread campaign of Abraha in central Arabia, as also in the oppression of the Ma'add on the confines of Shâm by the tyrant Jumâz/Ziyâd b. Mâlik b. Fahm al-Azdi (see Chapter 2). While the Sabaeo-Himyaritic domain was almost entirely associated with Yamani tribes, the Lakhmids' zone of influence from Iraq to Bahrayn was almost entirely inhabited by northern Nizâri tribes. Rabî'a and Tamîm, their nearest neighbours, had submitted to them and refrained from raiding the Sasanid Sawâd and border territories; further afield, Sulaym and Hawâzin concluded pacts, while the 'Âmir b. Şa'şa'a **(p. 17)** living furthest away were largely influenced<sup>36</sup> by playing off their internal feuds.<sup>36</sup>

But the difference between the northerners and southerners may also represent a deeper cultural heritage, perhaps also reflected in surviving structural linguistic differences between North and South bedouin types and a chain of dialects that once linked eastern, south-eastern, and southern Arabia.<sup>37</sup> The Arabs, in the sense of being nomadic desert dwellers, are mentioned in biblical and Assyrian texts going back to the early first millennium BC,<sup>38</sup> but they do not feature in South Arabian inscriptions until the first century BC.<sup>39</sup> All authors note the wide distribution of Ma'add, indicating that it was a tribal confederation of some sort,<sup>40</sup> but Zwettler (2000) sees it as essentially a techno-cultural grouping. Building on earlier ideas (notably those of Dostal and Bulliett), he proposes that the bedouin tribal groups of the central and northern

Peninsula had adopted the *shadâd*-saddle and by the third century were utilizing camels like horse cavalry within the desert environment. Or as Walter Dostal puts it: 'the dromedary herders can be classified into two groups, the northern "progressive" and the southern "conservative".' Despite the appeal of Zwettler's reasoning, it fails to convince. Ma'add may well have used the 'progressive' saddle technique and fought on camel-back, as opposed to using camels to bring the horses fresh to the scene of battle as Macdonald and Kuhnen would hold,<sup>41</sup> and for which there is also early evidence of from eastern Arabia.<sup>42</sup> But was this camel-saddle technique exclusive to the Ma'add, and how did the other 'northern' tribes, mentioned in the Namâra inscription as being grouped together as auxiliaries of the Romans under the same command, fight? Personally I remain convinced by Robin, who considers Ma'add to be a politico-geographical confederation of central Arabia whose coherence finally broke up into its component parts. On the other hand, the surge in Arab migration from southern into central and eastern Arabia may indeed be associated with cavalry tactics, for horses were practically unknown at the start of Christian era in South Arabia, but begin to feature prominently in inscriptions from the time of Yuha'rish and were common on the eve of Islam,<sup>43</sup> a fact also confirmed by palaeozoological work in Oman.<sup>44</sup>

**(p.18) The northern tribes: an overview**

To sum up, it seems that the above evidence is not incompatible with its genealogical 'rationalization'. Unlike the mythical Adnân, Nizâr existed in the north, and already had a distinct identity and territory by the start of the fourth century, in the same way as Qaḥṭân did, even earlier, in the south. As Nizâr disappears from view, Muḍar emerges, as also possibly Quḍâ'a. Ma'add, on the other hand, essentially represented the main tribal grouping of the central shield, and its relatively lengthy existence is probably in part due to the fact that the confederation was held together politically by Ḥimyar operating through Kinda. The Kinda rulers are seen by modern historians as a dynasty which imposed themselves in central Arabia,<sup>45</sup> in which case they probably relied for direct support from their own Mu'âwiya clans. Nevertheless, the Omani evidence (see below) shows that they were closely associated in central Arabia with Shanu'a Azd groupings, who in turn expanded from beyond Yamâma to the sea-lands of the Gulf, finally to settle in northern Oman. So when 'Ḥujrid' power broke up, the Kinda tribes not only had to retreat from a fundamentally hostile region back to Hadramawt, where they were already partly established, but also moved into northern Oman. And with them disappears Ma'add, in whose place emerges a more fragmented tribal picture with which we are more familiar: notably, Ḥanîfa, Tamîm, 'Âmir b. Ṣa'sa'a, and Rabî'a clans, all Nizâri, which the Naṣrids (Lakhmids) attempted to bring under their control within the Sasanid ambit. In the Hijaz Muḍar had already given way to its constituent tribes, while in the northern steppes of Sham Quḍâ'a has emerged.

So if this division between the zones of South Arabian influence and those of Byzantium and the Sasanids is so clear in the pre-Islamic history of Arabia, then perhaps it is necessary once more to reconsider the already much-debated nature of the 'moiety' divisions labelled Yaman and Nizâr that came into such sharp focus in the Marwânid period. Straightaway we should note one important difference between the two. While Yaman is a geographical term, which obviously has something to do with its Himyaritic homonym of YMNT and its connotation of 'the South', Nizâr is a personal name and features as a tribal grouping separate from Ma'add, albeit probably

closely associated. Genealogically, he is the northern equivalent of the southerners' Qaḥṭân. But 'Adnân does not feature in any inscription, whereas Qaḥṭân does.

**(p.19)** Political parties?

Ever since Wellhausen pointed out in 1902 that there was no sign of a pre-Islamic antagonism between northerners and southerners and that this divide only began to take form in the so-called 'Second Civil War' (*fitna*), triggered by Marj Râhiṭ, his approach has largely been followed by European scholars. Even so, they do presume the basis of the division to be tribal and that it escalated to polarize as Yaman and Qays/Muḍar. More recently, Shaban (1971) totally disregarded genealogy, and postulated that it represented tribal labels attached to political parties in the Marwânid period. Qays stood for imperialist racist policies, while Yaman was against expansion and sought the assimilation of Arabs and non-Arabs in Islam. Crone (1994) has firmly and wittily dealt with this nonsense and re-emphasized that the tribe was from the start the basis of organization of the *junds* in Syria and the *amṣâr* in Iraq, as too the divisions of Kûfa into sevenths and Basra into fifths. Increasingly, however, the 'tribal militia' became incorporated into professional armies and the top appointments as governors in the provinces went to generals who could run such units. No better example is to be found than the appointments of the Omani al-Muhallab b. Abi Ṣufra and his son Yazîd in Iraq and Khurâsân. Neither were tribal *ashrâf*, but military leaders predominantly of the Azd 'Umân (see below), and it was from these and other Yamani clans that they made their appointments: of Yazîd's, fourteen out of the sixteen were Yamani, and one of the other two was from allied Rabî'a. So, clearly, anyone who wanted an official position had an interest in presenting himself as a member of the relevant descent group; but once that genealogical alignment was made, it was difficult to go back. And increasingly, as the power, patronage, and wealth attached to these major military provincial governors grew, so the rivalry increased, a rivalry that took the form of tribal 'aşbiyya. People were born into one or other group and defended their *qawm* without any ideology, and their fortunes depended on those of their leaders. These swung with the rivalries in the Umayyad succession and a growing violence as those replaced in senior posts were forced to disgorge the wealth they had accumulated. Yazîd b. al-Muhallab was dismissed and tortured by Hajjaj until he escaped and took refuge with his fellow Azd in Palestine, where the governor, Sulaymân b. 'Abd al-Malik, persuaded the Caliph al-Walîd to grant him *amân*. Both Yazîd and Sulaymân had common enemies in Hajjâj and Qutayba b. Muslim al-Bâhili (Qays) who backed al-Walîd's son for the succession. On al-Walîd's premature death however, it was Sulaymân who succeeded, and now it was the turn of Hajjâj's family and Qutayba to pay the penalty. And when the Marwânid restoration came it was curtains for Yazîd, and with him the Azd. And so it went on. It was not party politics **(p.20)** but factionalism, yet the basis was tribal and the victories were sung in term of virulent tribal 'aşbiyya: 'the fires of Mazûn and its people have been extinguished...'46

The Quḍâ'a exception

Clearly the main key for understanding why this north-south division is seen as being largely the product of the early Islamic period was the political situation in Syria, where Kalb had become permanent allies of the Yamani since the time of Maslama b. 'Abd al-Malik's expedition against Constantinople.<sup>47</sup> But it was the confrontation at Marj Râhiṭ which supposedly led the Quḍâ'a finally to opt for a South Arabian Yamani genealogy through Qaḥṭân, rather than a North

---

Arabian one through Ma'add, thereby attaching themselves to Himyar, leaders in the genuine South Arabian confederation established at Ḥimṣ. These Yemen-Yamani interests extended into Iraq through Kûfa, where further genuine South Arabian tribes were prominent, and in Basra, where the Yamani Azd were from south-eastern Arabia. It is to be noted that the use of the term Yaman was from the start politically significant, and indeed we are rather uncertain of how to label the opposite grouping, Qays, Muḍar, Nizâr, or whatever. When the Yamani tribes originally resisted moving to Iraq, 'Umar remarked: 'Your blood bonds are much stronger. Why do the Muḍaris [who showed a preference for Iraq] not remember their kinsmen in Syria?'<sup>48</sup>

But is that an adequate explanation? Certainly there were many dubious genealogies that resulted from smaller tribes seeking attachment to greater ones in the Ibn al-Kalbi scheme of things, but none to compare with the (northern) Quḍâ'a's change to Qaḥṭân, in particular since there were righteous people in Quḍâ'a who refused to condone abandoning their Ma'addic origin. Ibn al-Kalbi was not responsible for the forgery, but he did try and harmonize it, essentially through manipulating the history of the Tanûkh migration. In the present writer's opinion it is that blatant *tour de passe-passe* which is primarily responsible for mistrust of Ibn al-Kalbi and consequently a failure to take on board other vital tribal alignments as expressed in the genealogical model and related histories. Instead of proving—that is, testing—the rule, the Quḍâ'a exception has itself become the rule, proof that all these tribal affiliations at the higher genealogical orders are fabrications resulting from polarizations and accretions during the early Islamic period.

The Quḍâ'a case is very special. There was an important tribal grouping, **(p.21)** long established in the steppes between Syria and Iraq, which recognized an identity through an ancestor called Quḍâ'a, most important of whom were Kalb, Juhayna, and Baliy, and his name was actually still used as a rallying-cry in 'Umar's time by the Baliy.<sup>49</sup> Initially the conquest of Syria had largely been the affair of genuine Yamani tribes, but to help confine their power to Ḥimṣ and counteract their ambitions, Mu'âwiya favoured Kalb. Their great tribal rivals were Qays, who are sometimes identified as Muḍar, and this enmity took on new dimensions as northern Syria and Jazîra increasingly became populated with Qaysis and Qinnasrîn became a *jund* in its own right.<sup>50</sup> The crisis came with Yazîd b. Mu'âwiya's premature death, after which Kalb finally did a deal with Marwân in order to maintain their precedence, while Qays backed Ibn Zubayr's representative in Syria and were crushed at Marj Râhiṭ. As a result of the terrible ensuing tribal infighting, Quḍâ'a abandoned Qays/Muḍar and opted for a Qaḥṭâni genealogy. Consequently they acquired such 'relatives' as Tanûkh, Mahra, and Khawlân, the first two of whom were vital for the genealogical manipulation that throws such wide discredit on the construct attributed to the Ibn al-Kalbis.

Madelung<sup>51</sup> has reassessed the reputed pivotal role of Marj Râhiṭ in the polarization of Qaḥṭân and 'Adnân. It was not Ḥimyar which brought about the attempted Qaḥṭâni union, as argued by Caskel, but rather the Quḍâ'a who had originally attempted to attach themselves to the powerful Ḥimyar and the *muhâjirûn* from the great settled tribes of Yemen and Had ramawt who were spearheading the advance against Rûm. Although Ḥimyar was prepared to go along some way with Arabization and accept relationship with Qaḥṭân, they were certainly not going to admit genealogical parity with the likes of the Kalb nomads. So it was that by the Marwânid

period, when Himyar had lost all importance, it was not they but the converted Kalb who led the Qaḥṭāni confederation against Qays.

#### Yaman: an overview

Madelung's reassessment not only opens a new angle on the Quḍā'a legerdemain that makes rather more transparent the distinction between northern and supposedly southern Quḍā'a and the manipulations by the Ibn al-Kalbis of the Tanûkh migration, but it also makes clear that Ḥimyar was apart and refused to be placed on a par with the other Yamani tribes through Qaḥṭān's descent (see Genealogical Table). The eponym was one of Saba's two sons (thus also uniting two major South Arabian dynastic groupings and historical periods), while his brother Kahlân is the forebear of all the major Yamani tribes, except Quḍā'a. **(p.22)** There is some confusion about who begat whom, but through one son ('Arîb? 'Udad?) stem Kinda, Ṭayy (Ṭayyi'), and Madhḥij, and through the other (Mâlik), Azd, and Hamdân. The suggestion that this primary division reflected 'the desert and the sown' divide<sup>52</sup> is in some measure borne out both by Madelung's observations about Ḥimyar's attitude towards the bedu and the epigraphic evidence. However, there is also an important geographical dimension.<sup>53</sup> While tribally Ḥimyar occupied south-western Arabia, that is, Lower Yemen, Hamdân was principally settled in mountainous Upper Yemen, north-east of Ṣan'â (where it is still famous under its two primary subdivisions of Ḥâshid and Bakîl). Hamdân had also expanded to the north and east towards Najrân and the western Wadi Jawf largely at the cost of Madhḥij (whence an important rivalry that was reflected in Kûfa), while Kinda establishing themselves in Hadramawt similarly expanded at the cost of the Murâd Madhḥij (whence another rivalry). There were, of course, elements from the se tribes elsewhere in the region, and from our point of view the presence of some Hamdân as well as Madhḥij in Hadramawt proper should be noted. The Azd and Ṭayy diaspora from a supposed homeland in Mârib will be discussed in due course.

But the essential point to emphasize here is that all these major tribes had their roots in 'Greater Yemen' and it is this that gives them their 'Yaman' identity. It is reinforced in genealogical terms by making them the descent of Qaḥṭān, but that genealogy is more significant for some than others. Yet Yaman was more than a tribal and geographical affinity; it was also the sense of having, one way and another, a common historical identity, and this embraced the tribes that migrated to Oman. True, the history has been highly embellished in legend and epics elaborated in poetry and colourful narration for popular belief; but then that is the only history that really mattered for the tribesmen. A further point to bear in mind is that the Arab population of (Greater) Yemen and (Greater) Oman was not only overwhelmingly Yaman, but that these regions contained by far and away the majority of the Arabian Peninsula's population. That fact is distorted by a vision of Arabia as projected on most modern maps, which places Riyâḍ somewhere in the middle, and it is reinforced by the popular belief that the population of the Peninsula was traditionally made up of nomads. They may have been *badw* in the Ibn Khaldûnian use of the term, which contrasts tribal society with the great centralized empires of urban-based *ḥaḍar* civilization, but the basis of life in Yemen and Oman has always been agriculture (coupled to maritime activities along their coastal facades). Naturally, the focal point of the **(p.23)** Arabian map moved towards the Hijaz with the advent of the Prophet, but even so, that only gives a northern bias to the true demographic weighting of the Peninsula. But in popular concept Yemen now becomes a sort of appendage to the Hijaz while Oman is entirely forgotten, a sort of island no one knows anything much about and, like Yemen, subject to

heresies (Hamdân became Zaydi and Oman Ibâdi). In reality, incorporating these two regions was vital to expanding the Islamic nucleus and the Yemen tribes early joined the conquests, making up by far the largest proportion of the army that moved to the northern front in Abû Bakr's time.<sup>54</sup> When 'Umar developed the Iraq front, the apostates from the *ridda* wars (most important of whom was al-Ash'ath) were allowed to participate, thereby bringing large contingents from Kinda and Hadramawt who settled at Kûfa (founded 17/638). If Balâdhuri's figures are to be believed, the initial make-up of the *mîsr* was 60 percent Yamani.<sup>55</sup> The Omani Yamani ended up in Basra.

Two features may briefly be mentioned as resulting from this rough description of the Yaman tribal distribution. The first is that there were elements from all the major Yemen-Yamani tribal groupings in both Syria (from where some moved to Egypt) and Kûfa, and that their internal feuding could consequently be exploited to pose Yaman against Yaman. As shown in Chapters 4 and 5, this intra-Yaman confrontation was evident in the first great *fitna*, during which, in general terms, the Kûfan Yamani supported 'Ali, while the Syrian Yamani lined up behind Mu'âwiya and remained Umayyad supporters. Yet despite the fact that the issue of 'Ali and 'Uthmân opposed the Yamani of Basra and Kûfa at the Battle of the Camel, and the Iraq-Syrian polarization divided the Yamani at Şiffin, it is still clear from even a superficial study of the rival 'parties' that whatever the supposed relationship of Qays/Muḍar and other supposed descent of Nizâr b. Ma'add b. 'Adnân, Yaman clearly had a stronger sense of identity, and that, I would argue, did partially derive from their history of association with South Arabian civilizations.

### Yaman Origins: The Azd

Even today, the great majority of the central Omani tribes claim a Yamani origin, Azd, Quḍâ'a, Ṭayy, and Kinda, and for the main period covered by this book that was true of northern Oman also. This Yamani preponderance is reflected in the composition of the five Omani contingents that first joined in the Islamic conquest, three of which were Azd (**p.24**) (Shanu'a, Mâlik b. Fahm, and 'Imrân); a fourth, the B. Râsib of Quḍâ'a or questionably Azd genealogy; and only one of Nizâr origins, the B. Nâjiyya (B. Sâma). In studying these Yamani relationships it is certainly important to regard that between Azd and Quḍâ'a, so as to understand Ibn al Kalbi's legerdemain in rationalizing the northern Quḍâ'a's switch to a Qaḥṭâni genealogy; but it is even more important to sort out the internal divisions of the Azd themselves so as to assess the rationale and validity of distinctions made in the classical sources between Azd 'Umân and Azd Sarât, between Azd 'Umân and Azd Baḥrayn, and between Azd 'Umân and Shanu'a ('I was like a man one of whose legs was sound while the other was suffering from an accident of fortune: the sound one was Azd Shanu'a the other Azd 'Umân'). Misapprehensions about these distinctions has led to misunderstandings from the time of the Namâra inscription to that of the Azd in Basra and Khurâsân, to the leadership structure in their *khums*, and the relationship with the Azd of Kûfa.

### Tafrîq al-Azd

The starting-point is to work out who the Azd were. As shown in the Genealogical Table (based on 'Awtabi), genealogically the Azd ancestor is Dir', a figure of no great significance personally, but whose genealogy is pivotal for rationalizing the linkages between the Azdi groupings and their other Yamani relations. Appropriately enough, local Omani history begins with the quasi-

legendary story of the Azd diaspora (*tafrîq/intishâr al-Azd*), the result of the Sayl al-Aram, the flood which supposedly destroyed the Mârib dam and caused its various clans to move away from their homeland by major genealogical groupings to settle first in western Arabia from Sarât to Hijaz, from where some groups further dispersed northwards towards Shâm (Greater Syria), some through central Arabia to Bahrayn and thence to Iraq and Oman, and some direct to Oman. It is important to note that these early migrations were intermittent and covered several centuries, and that although the three pathways were separate, rather like a stream that splits around islands, they rejoined in the fringes of the settled areas of the Gulf, Iraq, and Shâm, for this partly explains the complex history of the Tanûkh migration and the development and loyalties of the Lakhmids and Ghassânids, client states of the Sasanid and Byzantine empires. It also allows considerable latitude for genealogical manipulation.

Seen in this light, the Sayl al-Aram story is a legend in the proper sense of that word, 'that which ought to be read'. It serves two purposes: to unite Azd as a single unit through a common genealogy and early history; and to associate the Arab tribal auxiliaries from the desert with the homeland of the Sabaeen state, a geographical and political association underlined **(p.25)** by the Omani sources which state that the Azd named the land that the Persians called Mazûn after their home in one of the Mârib wadis, 'Umân. That, however, is not necessarily ahistorical. In the Sabaeen inscriptions several Arab groups are associated with specific regions, one of which was Mârib ('RB MRB<sup>56</sup>). But the essential is that the Mârib part of the story and the migration of Mâlik b. Fahm is very much of the 'South Arabian' tradition, as witness Wahb b. Munabbih (34-110 or 114) as a transmitter in 'Awtabi's account of it.<sup>57</sup> In this connection, a report in the *Nihâyatu 'l-irab fî akhbâri'l-furs wa'l-'arab* (some of which is also found in Dînawari)<sup>58</sup> is interesting. It relates that when Ardashîr (224 or 226-41) mounted an expedition to extend his authority over the opposite coast, the Arabs contacted As'ad b. 'Amr, King of Yemen, but before he could respond battle was joined, and amongst those killed was 'Amr b. Wâqid al-Himyari, King of Oman. Thereupon Ardashîr and the King of Yemen did a deal whereby each recognized the other's sphere. The names, and indeed the story as a whole, are suspect, yet may reflect a reality. The Arabs migrating from southern Arabia could well have vaguely recognized some Sabaeen authority, whence the recognition of a 'Himyari' as Omani king. Yet even after the Himyarites established control over Hadramawt in the first two decades of the fourth century, there is no record of the Sabaeo-Himyaritic state ever taking any interest in Oman. The Persian domain, we know from the Naqsh-e Rostam inscription, included Mazûn (Oman), a province that extended to al-Shîhr (Mahraland, see below) on the confines of Hadramawt. Indeed, Potts (2008) has argued that from Ardashîr to Shâpûr II's time at least, the Sasanids considered the Himyarite kingdom as a sort of client state. Furthermore, the South Arabian political sphere of influence never really extended beyond central Arabia and Yamâma, although there were sorties into northeastern Arabia: when Kinda did take control of Bahrayn and temporarily Hira, it did so as a Sasanid client. So perhaps there is a grain of truth in this history concerning a mutual understanding over spheres of influence.

#### Genealogical manipulations: Mârib

The Mârib part of the story, of course, does not stand up to an examination of the facts.<sup>59</sup> The dam was built for diversion of the seasonal flows, and as such was subject to both breaches by exceptional flood and silting **(p.26)** up. Recent archaeological evidence and the inscriptions of 456 and 548 AD show seven historical dams going back to the sixth century BC, but the great



dam and its northern sluice date from the fifth to sixth century AD. So, the Sayl al- 'Aram most likely represents the compression of a regular occurrence, probably six in the first half of the first millennium AD, into a single catastrophic event. All that is incompatible with the legendary story that when Mâlik b. Fahm arrived in Oman with the first Azd tribes they found the land subject to Dâra b. Dâra b. Bahmân (indicating Achaemanid times), or the fact that if their departure really resulted from the final breaking of the dam, around the start of the seventh century, then they could not have arrived in Oman before the Prophet was born! No, if indeed there was a bursting of the Mârib dam that led the Azd to disperse, it was one of the earlier ones and more likely refers to the disturbed conditions before the establishment of Himyarite rule. Furthermore, if the various versions of the Mârib story are examined carefully, it becomes clear that the 'bursting' of the dam was not the cause of the primary dispersal of the Azd, but of a secondary dispersal of the 'Amr Muzayqiyâ' (see Genealogical Table). Which is why Mas'ûdi transmits the tradition that the B. Ghassân fixed their calendar from the date they made their escape from Mârib before the rats that were undermining the dam caused it to collapse. Be all that as it may, it in no way invalidates the fact that Azd, Kinda, and elements of other important Yaman tribes, like Tayy and Qaḥṭân, were associated with the Sabaeo-Himyaritic power, whose ancient centre was based on Mârib.

### Tanûkh

The most obvious genealogical manipulation, however, is the story of the Tanûkh migration of Azd, Quḍâ'a, and Nizâr from Bahrayn which comes as far north as Anbar, from where, after Ardashîr extended power into Iraq, elements moved to found Hira (al-Hîra), later the capital of the Lakhmid state, as recounted in Ṭabari based on Ibn al-Kalbi.<sup>60</sup> It starts with the formation of an Azd-Quḍâ'a alliance in Bahrayn, in which the Quḍâ'i leader Mâlik b. Zuhayr b. Mâlik b. Fahm b. Taym Allâh b.... Quḍâ'a, calls on the Azdi leader Jadhîma al-Abrash b. Mâlik b. Fahm al-Azdi to join them, sealing the alliance by a marriage. Already the legerdemain is obvious, two key figures called Mâlik b. Fahm with a brother 'Amr, one with a Quḍâ'i genealogy, the other an Azdi. All this (p.27) happens in Bahrayn, where the Quḍâ'i newcomers from south-western Arabia found the Azd already installed; and an impression is also given that the Tanûkh were joined by the 'Imrân Azd. Nothing is said about Oman. By the time elements from this migration reach Anbar matters become vague and the kings are named successively as Mâlik, followed by his brother 'Amr, implicitly Quḍâ'a, and then Jadhîma, explicitly Azd. In other words, the leadership has passed from the Quḍâ'a to the Azd. Those Quḍâ'a who came with Mâlik and 'Amr then proceed to join those Quḍâ'a already in Shâm, thereby neatly joining the southern and northern Quḍâ'a and preparing the way for the shift in their genealogy that occurred in Umayyad times.

But when it comes to Hira, the version related by Mas'ûdi,<sup>61</sup> who concentrates on the western Azd migration, starts becoming entwined with that of Ṭabari. According to this, after Mârib the Ghassânids (the supposed descent of Mâzin b. al-Azd) moved north and took control of the Tanûkh state previously ruled over by two groups of Quḍâ'a (i.e. Mâlik b. Fahm and Mâlik b. Zuhayr), while another group moved on to found the proto-Lakhmid state. In other words, Mas'ûdi is starting from the other side of the Peninsula and looking at the move of the Azd from western Arabia into Shâm, absorbing in the process the eastern Tanûkhid state, and attributing the origins of Hira to one of their own groups. Basically Mas'ûdi's reports concentrate on providing a significant western Azd presence in what was essentially northern Quḍâ'a territory

and use Hira to extend their influence into the Lakhmid state, while the Ibn al-Kalbi version creates Quḍâ'a influence in an essentially Azdi area and uses Hira to extend the eastern Quḍâ'a's influence into Shâm.

So, once again, the Arab account of the Tanûkh migration seems to be largely a figment of the genealogists' imagination, and the many stories about how Mâlik b. Fahm's son, Jadhîma al-Abrash, married Zabbâ (Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra, second half of the third century) and met his death at her hands, as too accounts of the marriage of his sister to the Lakhmid 'Adi, are given little credence. Yet once again, epigraphic evidence coupled to non-Arab sources indicates a real historical basis to these stories, but with a new slant. That Tanûkh existed in northeastern Arabia is attested from Ptolemy's Thanouetai (mid-second century) to at least the mid-fifth century, possibly even sixth, and is the only tribe of the area mentioned in Ḥimyarite inscriptions. The famous Umm al-Jimâl inscription (RES 1097) attests to the existence of a Gadimathou/ *gdymt* = Jadhîma, King of *tnḥ* = Tanûkh, and he was indeed murdered by Zenobia and was succeeded by his sister's son, 'Amr b. 'Adi b. Naṣr, generally considered as the first of the Lakhmid dynasty, the **(p.28)** B. Naṣr = Naṣrids;<sup>62</sup> he was followed by his son, the Imru'l-Qays of the Namâ ra inscription. The Arabo-Islamic tradition holds that they ruled at Hira and sees the Lakhmids as a continuous line down to Nu'mân IV, executed by his Persian suzerain in 602. According to Shahîd's reconstruction,<sup>63</sup> Imru'l-Qays defection to the Romans probably resulted from Shâpûr's vicious campaign against the Arabs in 325, which is why he is buried far away as some sort of Christian. But that thesis is essentially based on the tradition reported by Ibn al-Kalbi that the family seat was Hira. Robin (in press) queries the existence of a town Hira at that time. It does not feature in non-Arabic sources before the fifth century, when it appears as a widely scattered agglomeration with no defensive wall nor central fortification. The sources in Greek never speak of Hira but rather refer to the camp (*skênai*) of Mundhir III, and this seems to conform to the Syriac *ḥirtâ'* and the Sabaean *ḥrt* (probably pronounced *ḥîra*) which simply meant military camp. Robin believes that none of these Arabian dynasties, Kinda, Tanûkh/Lakhmid, or Ghassân, had any real 'capital', any more than their power was based on the eponymous tribe, but rather on the authority delegated by the suzerain powers who rarely conferred it on any single prince: only Ma'add and Muḍar represented real tribal confederations. Hira did, however, perhaps develop some of the characteristics of a kingdom, and may have operated as a Sasanid province governed by an Arab prince from a non-local tribe.

Once the idea that Namâra and Hira represented fixed bases is dropped, it becomes much clearer that the nature of these Arab 'states' was essentially fluid, both in location and the tribal basis of power, and why the idea that a western migration of Azd and Quḍâ'a could be merged with an eastern one through the Hira-Tanûkh-Lakhmid connection; similarly, how it was that Imru'l-Qays b. 'Amr could operate over such a huge area, and why some see his inscription as implying that he was empowered by both Persia and Rome.<sup>64</sup>

#### The two Azds

However, our principal interest lies in the '*asdyn*' of the inscription. It is generally assumed that the '*asd*' are Azd, *a fortiori* since the Arab genealogists themselves state that Asd (not Asad) is a variant of Azd. I would challenge, however, the further assumption that the two Azds are Azd Oman and Shanu'a Azd;<sup>65</sup> or as Shahîd (1979) holds, two out of three or **(p.29)** possibly even four Azds. The reference, I believe, is not to any specific Azd group, Azd Sarât, Azd 'Umân, Azd

al-Bahrayn, Shanu'a Azd, and so on, but rather to the Azd moving northwards respectively from the western and eastern sides of the Arabian Peninsula into the marchlands of the Fertile Crescent; in other words, the two groups the genealogists conflate and manipulate to explain the Qudâ a conversion. And if Jadhîma was really of Mâlik b. Fahm's descent that could indicate that it was an Azdi king who ruled the two Azds and that there was an Azd-Tanûkhid origin to the Lakhmid state, as Robin also suggests. However, in considering this, the tendency of the Arab genealogists to incorporate the rulers of these frontier kingdoms into their own genealogies and thereby enhance the Arab status in the pre-Islamic period should be borne in mind (particularly obvious in the case of Hîmyar). But that does not preclude the possibility that the dominant group in the Arab migration that eventually associated with the Aramaic-speaking settled population to emerge as the Tanûkhid state were Azd of the eastern migration, and that Azd may well have been involved with the forming of the so-called Lakhmid state. Likewise the Ghassânid Azd, the last successors to the Tanûkhid federation, may well have extended authority in the opposite direction towards Hira, as the Arab histories indicate.<sup>66</sup>

That the Azd from the east and the west were early on present in the Fertile Crescent borderlands is clearly attested, both by the epigraphic evidence already quoted, and by a Hîmyaritic inscription of Shammar Yuha 'ish III which mentions a King of 'asd, probably the same person who features in his embassy to Seleucia and Ctesiphon, some time before 297 AD.<sup>67</sup> Von Wissman's discussion<sup>68</sup> of Greek sources shows that the Asatenoi were located between Gerrha (Bahrayn) and the mouth of the Tigris, the region of Ptolemy's Thanouetai. This area, Bal'ami indicates, had for long been subject to the Kings of Oman. That too is not without basis. The region around the mouth of the Gulf known as Mesene/ Maishân is where Alexander the Great's original city, refounded around 170 BC, eventually became the centre of a kingdom that remained quasi-independent of Parthia for nearly 350 years, under the Greek name of Spasinou Charax (Charax of Hyspasines). The main emporium for Babylonia, with a colony in Palmyra, it was closely associated with the 'Omani', as confirmed by a coin dating to 142 AD of Meredet who also describes himself as King (*basileus*) of the Omanites. For long these Omani had not been considered as anything to do with Oman or the city of 'Omana', over whose location much ink has been spilt. Potts is now (p.30) inclined to identify it with the important archaeological site of al-Dûr on the UAE coast, whose main period of prosperity was indeed in the first century AD, and it may well be that it was Meredet who brought the Arabian coast of the Gulf into his domain.<sup>69</sup> If that is the case, it indicates that the main emporium for the Oman region was 'within' the Gulf, in the region that became known as Jurrafâr/Jullafâr } Julfâr, whereas the expectancy from the later Sasanid period (see Chapter 2) was that it should be 'without', at or near Sohar. In which case, and perhaps up to the fourth century, it would seem that the international trade of the Indian Ocean monsoonal circulation system of which Sohar became a key element was not greatly developed, but that the Mesene emporium may have been a stimulating factor in its early growth. Although the Arabs had little to do with this Characene state, finally broken by Ardashîr, it certainly shows an intensification of Oman's ancient relations with 'Iraq'.

In sum, the evidence points to a strong historical basis to Arab accounts concerning Tanûkh, and that associated elements of Azd from eastern Arabia were prominent in the migration into the Fertile Crescent, where eventually they melded with another stream of Azd migrants coming from western Arabia, most important of which were Mâzin b. al-Azd clans.<sup>70</sup> It is these two

migrant streams that form the two Azds and has allowed the genealogists to manipulate the evidence to provide a plausible explanation of the Azd-Quḍâ'a tie up. So while there may be some validity to Caskel and Strenziok's thesis that the genealogists' task was to build up Yamani unity to meet the political situation in the early Arab empire, I would also suggest that they had two other tasks to perform: to incorporate what might be termed 'proto-Arab' societies into the Arab tribal structure, and to identify the main civilizations of southern Arabia and the frontier states of the Fertile Crescent with the Arabs.

One of the problems about Ibn al-Kalbi's macro scale work is that it is precisely that. By its very nature it is crude and leads to questioning. Thus when Caskel and Strenziok come to deal specifically with the Azd, they conclude to the effect; 'when we come to sort out the Azd, we are somewhat horrified to find that the tribes and sub-tribes of the Azd Sarât and Azd Oman are on occasion mixed. The object of the arrangement is clear: by means of the genealogy a primitive and non-existent unity has been achieved for political or party reasons. But the means is so violent that we must ask if it is in fact based on some prior development ... When we learn that the Azd living in Basra before the arrival of the Azd Oman in (p.31) 59/679 were for the most part Daws the explanation becomes obvious: the first arrival of the Mâlik b. Fahm sought shelter next to the homesteads of the Daws. But why? The answer lies in the situation in Kûfa.'

Not so! As we shall see in a later chapter this is exactly the opposite of the explanation. But they are certainly right to suspect a prior development.

#### The Omani traditions

Of course there were accretions to the Azd tribal tree. But it is not the affiliations of the Ghassân, the Anşâr or other noble attachments that matter, but the incorporation of the Azd in southern Arabia, Oman, and Bahrayn with the Azd groups from western Arabia, as too affiliation with certain other Yamani tribes, notably the Kinda, which lie at the heart of the Azd position in the Yaman party. The situation cannot be sorted out without the Basran and Omani traditions, added to the evidence just discussed. The essential source is 'Awtabi's *K. al-Ansâb*,<sup>71</sup> only partly surviving, particularly unfortunate since it breaks off in the middle of the Shanu'a Azd. Also of importance is the *Ishtiâq* of Ibn Durayd, himself of Omani origin, who spent some considerable time in the country during al-Şalt b. Mâlik al-Kharûşî's Imamate 237-272/851-886. Although generally paying lip service to Ibn al-Kalbi's macro-scale genealogy, their accounts are far more detailed when dealing with the tribes of eastern Arabia and it is from such detail that an alternative model for the structure of the Yaman tribes may be found. Ibn al-Kalbi was aware of these Omani versions,<sup>72</sup> for he recounts on the authority of his father and Sharqî b. al-Quḍâmi, how Mâlik b. Fahm left Sarât for 'Umân, and it is significant that among the 150 or so works he wrote, there was a *K. Tafrîq al-Azd*.<sup>73</sup> But quite clearly he chose to ignore or gloss them in his macro-scale works, presumably because of his need to explain the northern Quḍâ'a conversion, through his Mâlik b. Fahm manipulation.

'Awtabi's account makes totally clear that Mâlik b. Fahm and his tribes came to Oman from the south, and that Mâlik b. Zuhayr was not a Quḍâ'i but another Azdi leader from the 'Abdullâh b. al-Azd whose potential challenge to Mâlik b. Fahm was averted by a marriage which stipulated that the offspring took precedence. Hence the origins of Salîma, whose accidental killing of his father is famed in *jâhili* poetry. The historical importance of the B. Salîma families both in Oman

and on the Persian coasts (the Julandâ b. Karkar clans) will become clear in the course of this book. 'Abdullâh b. al-Azd's genealogical significance is to incorporate the **(p.32)** ancient tribe of 'Akk who have a part in the traditional history of the Azd in south-western Arabia. Certainly it is the kind of accretion that Caskel might challenge, but the fact remains that 'Akk elements were closely associated with the Azd in al-Muhallab's wars against the Azâriqa.<sup>74</sup> As for Mâlik b. Fahm's son Jadhîma (al-Abrash), while 'Awtabi dutifully recounts the stories found in the classical sources, he simply serves from a genealogical point of view as the father of Awf, from whom four main groupings derive, one of which is distinguished in Omani history as the Jahâdim.

The Omani sources, however, are quite definite that the Azd leadership all the way from Oman to the borderlands of Iraq was under Mâlik b. Fahm al-Azdi and his descent until well after Tanûkh, when it passed to the Shanu'a (the third Azdi migration wave, see Chapter 2). Unfortunately, the only surviving reference to Tanûkh in 'Awtabi is an aside which shows how the Tha'laba reluctantly left the rest of their brethren in Oman because of the growing split between the Salîma supported by the Hinâ (Hunâ'a), and the Ma'n (see below), to join their maternal relatives in Tanûkh.<sup>75</sup> His use of *akhwâl* indicates that the Tanûkh Azd were not themselves Mâlik b. Fahm *ikhwân*, more likely 'Imrân, the second major Azd migration who did arrive in Bahrayn via central Arabia. The Tanûkh then moved to join Jadhîma b. Mâlik b. Fahm, who was already installed in Hira. from where they spread out and broke up in Shâm and the Jazîra. That Jadhîma was already king (*mâlik*) in Hira and not part of the Tanûkh migration itself is repeated in 'Awtabi's treatment of the Mâlik b. Fahm migration to Oman. This helps confirm my own reading of the so-called Tanûkh migration. The Mâlik b. Fahm tribes were the first Azd to arrive (via the south coast) in eastern Arabia and spread from Oman into Bahrayn and even perhaps the borderlands of Iraq, but their migration also included important elements of southern Qudâ'a (see Chapter 2), and this allows Ibn al-Kalbi to effect the manipulation already described. There they were joined by the 'Imrân Azd who recognized the paramount authority of the Mâlik b. Fahm. Some moved on to Oman, others, perhaps driven by demographic or environmental pressure, joined in a push northwards and in due course became associated with the Tanukhid state, so that the histories actually claim King Jadhîma was an Azdi.

The example of the 'Amr b. al-Azd again shows how the Ibn al-Kalbi macro-scale approach distorts a subtler picture. 'Awtabi specifies no less than eleven offspring, two of which merged with 'Abd al-Qays, two into Ghassân, one into Madhḥij, while two retained their identity in Shâm, **(p.33)** two in Hijâz-Sarât, and two in Oman.<sup>76</sup> This is a far cry from the simple theme of incorporating the Sarât with the Omanis. On the contrary, it recognizes the essential fluidity of nomadic tribal groupings as they dispersed. In the same way, his treatment of the Bâriq and their cousins<sup>77</sup> characterizes the development of major tribal groupings and the continuous exchange of subsections with others as a group breaks away or moves off elsewhere and becoming absorbed into the dominant alliance of the new area. Similarly, when he reports that some say that the Nadab of Oman are the same as those of the Sarât (a subsection of Hanw b. al-Azd) while others maintain they descend from Nadab/Ziyâd b. Shams (Shanu'a), he is making nothing of this but simply noting that there are Nadab in Oman as well as Sarât and they may or may not be related.

So, once stripped of their more questionable attachments, there are three major genealogical groupings of core Azd clans, Daws, Shanu'a, and 'Imrân, and in all three there is a mixing of western and eastern Azd. Like Di', Daws is a person, a necessary genealogical figure to tie the Mâlik b. Fahm and 'Amr b. Fahm into the descent of Naşr b. al-Azd (whence, quite rightly, Caskel's reservations). But while it is true that the majority Mâlik b. Fahm were mostly in eastern Arabia and only a few in Sarât, this is not surprising since Mâlik left the Sarât because of a quarrel with his brother 'Amr (according to Ibn al-Kalbi *apud* 'Awtabi). It is partly because they were essentially an Omani group and the first to migrate there that they became known as Azd 'Umân (see Chapter 2). The geographical separation is less clear in the 'Imrân, whose importance tends to be exaggerated because of the importance of the 'Atîk and their Muhallabid attachments. The most famous groups were in western Arabia, but there was a strong element in eastern Arabia too. To judge from those settling in Oman, they appear to be rather fragmented, and essentially concentrated in the north, as to be expected if they came via Bahrayn. But while the geographic split is fairly clear with the Daws, less so with the 'Imrân, the Azd Shanu'a, who were the last to come to Oman, are highly integrated between the two areas. The sobriquet Shanu'a specifically applies to the offspring of 'Uthmân b. Naşr, so called because they hated each other. That certainly was to become apparent in the rivalry between the ẖuddân and the Yaḥmad, a major contributory factor to the outbreak of civil war that brought to an end the First Imamate. All sources, genealogical and otherwise, Omani and classical, show that they were found both in Ḥijâz and Oman, although predominately in the latter. Even if it is argued that the unification between Azd Sarât and Azd 'Umân through Daws is a genealogical fabrication, and questions might be raised concerning the descent of 'Imrân from Amr Muzayqiyâ', the (p.34) intimate linkage of Shanu'a groups between the two sides of Arabia is not to be doubted. Furthermore, the distinction between Azd 'Umân and Azd Shanu'a is clearly brought out by the geographical pattern of settlement in Oman (see Chapter 2).

So I would maintain that there was a very real sense of Azd identity (not necessarily alliance) in pre-Islamic Arabia, in particular amongst the Shanu'a, whose early relationship with the Kinda was also to play an active part in the development of a Yaman 'party' in Islamic times. It was neither an invention of the genealogists, nor a rationalization of the political situation in Shâm and Iraq, or Basra and Kûfa. Which is why even Caskel and Strenziok sense there may be some basis to an Azd identity, although their explanation for it is unsatisfactory.

Having dealt at some length with these wider issues concerning Yaman and Nizâr, and a north-south divide among the Arab tribes which was to become so important in the early Islamic period when Ibâḍism took root amongst the Yaman of Iraq, we may now turn more specifically to the pre-Islamic situation of the Arabs in Oman, and their position in the Sasanid empire, the other major inherited factor that was to be formative in the development of Ibâḍi ideology.

Notes:

- (1) The spelling Yaman denotes the tribal grouping and Yemen the region.
- (2) Isfahâni *Aghâni*, quoted Chelhod *et al.* 1984:21.
- (3) Interview published in *al-Majalla*, quoted Dresch 1989: 7.
- (4) Cf. Wilkinson 1987.

- (5) Cf. Tabari, i. 2911–12; Balâdhuri, *Ansâb*, xi. 108; al-Mubarrad (himself of Omani Azd origin) *Kâmil*, 668.
- (6) 2005: 7.
- (7) See the stories concerning the two unconsummated marriages between the Prophet and the womenfolk accompanying the Kinda leaders delegation in Lecker 1995b: ‘Does a queen give herself to a subject?’
- (8) Madelung 1986b.
- (9) Cf. Hoyland 2001: ch. 9.
- (10) Ibid. 243, who quotes Josephus (d. c. 110 AD).
- (11) I have discussed this at length in Wilkinson 1977 and 1987.
- (12) 1989: 30.
- (13) Wilkinson 1977: 183–5.
- (14) Themselves probably of Nabâhina origins.
- (15) Wilkinson 1987: ch. 11.
- (16) ‘Awtabi, AB212ff., Ibn Durayd, *Ishtiqaq*, 508, Ibn Qutayba, 108.
- (17) The following account is based essentially on Robin's numerous publications and Gajda (see References), occasionally modified as cited for individual points. The general background largely derives from *EI2* arts. Ḥadramawt, Kinda, Mârib; Gajda in *Yémen*; Potts 1990: ii. ch. 5; Müller website 2002.
- (18) I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century* (Washington, DC, 1984) [henceforth *BAFOC*], 38.
- (19) Which interestingly enough they killed, which shows not only that Ma'add had few horses, but that the South Arabians had no use for them (see discussion below).
- (20) Zwettler 2000: n. 59.
- (21) For discussion of their location at this time see Bâfaqih 1990: ch. 6.
- (22) Nevertheless, it is relevant to note that the war-cry (‘Ya Ghassân’) was used by the Azd confederation at the Battle of the Camel; Ṭabari, i. 3195.
- (23) 1996 and in press.
- (24) I would like, very tentatively, to suggest that this name is a reference to his Judaic religion, the custom of eating bitter herbs at the Passover feast.

- (25) For discussion see Robin 1996, Gajda 1996 and in *Yémen*: also *EI2*, Kinda, and Potts 1990: ii. ch. 5.
- (26) Bâfaqih 1990: 287; Breton and Roux 2005.
- (27) al-Ansary 1982.
- (28) Bâfaqih 1990: 308–9.
- (29) Details in Daghfous 1995: ii. 778–9, as also for Mansûr's policy.
- (30) See notably Mas'ûdi *Murûj*, vi. 45–6, Ṭabari, iii. 146, 152, 167–8; 'Awtabi, AB204–6.
- (31) See notably Gajda 1996.
- (32) By Robin who discusses these issues in his 'in press' article.
- (33) Cf. notably (as well as the already-cited sources) *EI2*, Abraha (Beeston), Kister 1965*a*, Sayed 1988.
- (34) Stemming from another son of Ḥujr Âkil Murâr, Mu'âwiya. For the identification see Kister 1965*a*.
- (35) Cf. in particular Olinder 1927 (*non vidē*); Caskel Ma'add in index *Jamhara*, vol. ii; the footnotes 312, 362, 409 to vol. v of the Ṭabari translation; *EI2*, Lakhmids (Shahîd).
- (36) Kister 1968, based on Abû'l-Baqâ' (now published, see References).
- (37) Holes 2006.
- (38) Cf. *inter alia* Aggoula in Lozachmeur (ed.), 1995.
- (39) Robin, personal communication. He considers earlier mentions to be highly dubious.
- (40) It is worth adding that some Ma'add accompanied the start of the Mâlik b. Fahm migration (see Ch. 2).
- (41) For references see Zwettler 2000.
- (42) Potts 1998.
- (43) Ryckmans 1964; Robin in press.
- (44) See publications by Hans-Peter and Margarethe Uerpmann, whom I thank for a valuable discussion.
- (45) Zwettler argues for translating *hllw 'rđ Ma'd<sup>m</sup>* (Ry. 509:5) to indicate Himyarite colonization, rather than Robin's dwelt or camped in Ma'add territory. Gajda believes it has the



same sense as the Arabic *iḥtalla*, i.e. to establish power, and that conforms more to my own view.

(46) Mubarrad, *Kâmil*, 568.

(47) Kister 1976: 57.

(48) Quoted Mad'aj 1988: 71-2.

(49) *EI2*, Quḍâ'a.

(50) Crone 1994.

(51) 1986*b*, see also 1997: 199 *et passim*.

(52) For references see *EI2*, Qaḥṭân.

(53) See Chelhod 1984: ii. 15-17 (largely based on Hamdâni, *Iklîl*).

(54) As both Chelhod and Mad'aj clearly bring out.

(55) 12,000 and 8000 respectively: *Futûḥ* quoted Chelhod 1984: ii. 24-5.

(56) CIH 343/10; see Bâfaqîh 1990: ch. 6.

(57) AB179v ff.

(58) Cf. Piacentini 1985.

(59) Based on the consultants' report for constructing a new dam at Mârib which includes an appendix by A. F. L. Beeston on the 'Dam Rupture' inscriptions; and a summary of the German excavations (1978-2003) by B. Vogt published by the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Sanaa.

(60) Ṭabari, i. 745 ff., 767 ff., ii. 821 ff.; cf. also Yâqût art. al-Ḥîra. See also Tanûkh in *EI1* suppl. and *EI2*. Caussin de Perceval 1847-8 has collected the majority of these stories (see in particular vol. i. 207-14), drawn primarily from Ibn Khaldûn, Ibn Qutayba, Mas'ûdi, and *K. al-Aghâni* (Ṭabari was unavailable to him).

(61) *Murûj*, iii. 181 ff., 214 ff., 365 ff.

(62) A Sasanid bilingual inscription of Narseh I (293-302) describes 'Amr king of Lâhmay amongst his supporters, while a Manichaean text refers to a 'Amarô, king of the sons of Lahim': see Robin, in press.

(63) *BAFOC*, ch. 1.

(64) For details of modern readings see Potts 1990: ii. ch. 5.

(65) For references see *ibid.* 238.

(66) See in particular Shahîd's articles in *EI2*, Ghassân and al-Ĥîra.

(67) Potts 2008 suggests that it was on learning of Shâpûr II's accession.

(68) 1964: 188 ff.; also Müller 2002.

(69) The above account is based on Potts 1988.

(70) They all stem from a forebear 'Amr Muzayqiyâ' (b. 'Amir Ma'al-Samâ ... b. Mâzin b. al-Azd), and include the Ghassânids, the 'Imrân, the Khuzâ'a and their Anşâr allies ('Aws and Khazraj) in the Ĥijâz and the Bâriq in Sarât.

(71) For discussion of his dates *see* chapter 12 and the note on sources.

(72) As also Ya'qûbi *Ta'rikh* i, 232-4.

(73) Ibn Khallikân iii, 608-11.

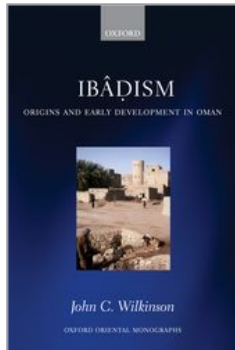
(74) AB134v. A sign of their antiquity and uniqueness is indicated by one standard genealogy which makes them the son of Ma'add's brother, al-Dîth b. 'Adnân.

(75) A262r/AB194r 'as already described', indicating that he did have a fuller account.

(76) A194r.

(77) A215ff./AB153rff.

University Press Scholarship Online  
**Oxford Scholarship Online**



## Ibâdism: Origins and Early Development in Oman

John C. Wilkinson

Print publication date: 2010

Print ISBN-13: 9780199588268

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2011

DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.001.0001

## The Pre-Islamic Heritage: Mazûn and the Arabization of Arabia

John C. Wilkinson

DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.003.0002

### **[ - ] Abstract and Keywords**

This chapter continues with the pre-Islamic period and explains the tribal background with which the Imamate had to come to terms on Oman, its role in the Yaman-Nizâr civil war, and the alienation of northern Oman from the core of the Ibâdi state. Basic relationships were rooted in the territorial distribution of Arab migration waves in eastern Arabia and the domination of the Azd and Kinda clans, under whose leadership the first Imamates were set up in southern Arabia. Oman formed part of the Persian Empire and as its importance grew in Indian Ocean trade, it was directly occupied and developed under the name of Mazûn in late Sasanid times. The subject and marginalized status of the Arab tribesmen was a matter for scorn for the over-weaning Hijazis, but gave the Arabs a certain empathy with the peasants and under-privileged. Ibâdi, like all Khariji ideology, was rooted in the notion of equality before God and this led eventually leading to a remarkable assimilation of the tribes and villagers after the Imamate was established in Oman.

*Keywords:* Ibâdi, Oman, Imamate, Arab migration, Azd, Kinda, Mazûn, pre-Islamic period, Persian Empire

### **The First Arab Migrations to Oman**

According to the Omani stories, Mâlik and his followers, accompanied by Quḍâ'a and possibly some Ma'add and Ṭayy groupings, quit the Sarât and Tihâma because of a tribal quarrel and settled first at Barhût in Wadi Hadramawt. There, he learnt of the Persian presence in Oman and sent his son Hunâ'a (Hinâ), some say Farâhîd, to prospect with a considerable force. The Ma'add stayed behind, as Mâlik and his followers progressed along the fringes of southern Arabia and began to infiltrate the southeastern outskirts of Oman, in Ja'lân and on the coast

around the Qalhât area. The story says that en route Mahra separated from Mâlik and stayed in al-Shiḥr!

### Mahra

This represents a major rationalization of the Omani and Azd relationship with the south coast, the area referred to in early Omani texts as Bilâd al-Mahra. The Mahra are not a tribe but rather a people, and their language belongs to the Old South Arabian (OSA) grouping; their pre-Islamic association as mercenaries with the South Arabian civilization is attested by various inscriptions.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, traditionally they are scarcely considered as Arabs by their neighbours. On the other hand, they are *sharîf* (of honourable descent), and in Dhofar, along with the Qâra and Âl Kathîr, form one of the three 'strong' tribes,<sup>2</sup> unlike the *da'îf* Sheḥri OSA speakers of the Hadara (South Coast), weak, subject tribes with lowly occupations and traditionally not permitted to carry arms (such overt distinctions do not exist in Oman). The Mahra themselves recognize two principal and ancient divisions, the Mahra pure and the Mahricized Arabs. Before the Kathîr expanded in the mid-sixteenth century their territory was **(p.36)** very much more extensive, including Tarîm (in the Hadramawt) and al-Shiḥr,<sup>3</sup> while their long historical control of Socotra is also attested in the early sources. It is clear from the campaigns in the early Imamate period that they also ranged over much of southern Oman, and tribal traditions record how they were driven out of the region. Their independence at the dawn of Islam is also confirmed by Ibn Ḥabîb's statement<sup>4</sup> that al-Shiḥr, situated at the foot of the mountains where was found the tomb of the Prophet Hûd, was one of the *sûq al-'arab* and no 'Ushr was collected there since it belonged to no kingdom and the merchants were under the protection of the B. Muḥârib b. Ḥarb of the Mahra.

Just as Bilâd al-Mahra has connotations still current in the traditional geography of the region,<sup>5</sup> so too does al-Shiḥr. The name does not simply appertain to the port, largely developed by the Kathîris, but more generally to the southern coast, the homeland of the Mahra whose capital was a port called al-As'â' in the early Islamic period. And the close association with the Azd in the region is indicated by the sneering remark of Abû 'Ubayda (Ma mar b. al-Muthannâ) that Ardashîr b. Bâbak had made them sailors in Shiḥr 'Umân six hundred (*sic*) years before Islam. The association, albeit not necessarily alliance, of certain Mahra groups, known as the Qamr-Riyâm,<sup>6</sup> with the B. 'Amr b. Mâlik b. Fahm clans is also indicated by the history of their initial concentration in the Dhofar region and subsequent spread into the Ja'lân (see below).

Genealogically the relationship is explained through making them Mahra b. Ḥaydân b. 'Amr b. al-Ḥâf b. Quḍâ'a b. Mâlik b. Ḥimyar (Hamdâni has considerable reservations about Mâlik b. Ḥimyar's descent), which makes them Quḍâ'a and Yaman, but without descending through Qaḥṭân, and thus rationalizes their relationship both with the Azd and as part of the Ḥimyarite domain. This Mahri genealogy, recognized both in Omani and classical sources,<sup>7</sup> shows that certain tribes, notably the Riyâm, albeit very much considered as Arab, have nevertheless a Mahri origin, which perhaps accounts for the *sharîf* status of the pure Mahra. The Mahricized inhabitants of Dhofar before the arrival of the Arabs, on the other hand, are described by Hamdâni as *bayâsira*, a term which still denotes excluded peoples like the Shaḥâra<sup>8</sup> and Baṭâḥira, and even in Oman today represents a client class, considered by the Arabs **(p.37)** as

without *aşl*, racial origin. It is arguable that they belong to the earliest indigenous stock of the region.<sup>9</sup>

It was through this early mixing of Mahra and Mâlik b. Fahm that Ibn al-Kalbi was able to blur an Azdi and Quḍâ'î ancestry for the two Mâlik b. Fahm leaders in the Tanûkh migration. In other words, while there was good reason for the genealogists to dispute the northern Quḍâ'a's claim to stem from Ḥimyar, there did exist a very real southern Arabian grouping to which this Quḍâ'î genealogy has been attributed, closely associated with Azd and which was part of the Yaman alliance *ab initio*. That is why the genealogists assigned the Quḍâ'a in Kûfa to the same seventh as Ḥaḍramawt, Kinda, and Azd,<sup>10</sup> while the Yemen-Yamanis, Madhḥij, Ḥimyar, and Hamdân formed a separate seventh, whose rivalry was reflected in the challenge by al-Ashtar al-Nakhâ'î (Madhḥij clan) to al-Ash'ath al-Kindi as paramount Yaman leader.

#### The Mâlik b. Fahm in Oman

To return to Mâlik b. Fahm's arrival in Oman.<sup>11</sup> From their base around Qalhât, the Arabs began to penetrate to the desert fringes of the Jawf (central Oman on the western side of the mountains) where, the accounts state, the people recognized Dâra b. Dâra b. Bahmân as their suzerain. Negotiations with the 'Marzban' ensued, during which time reinforcements arrived for the Persians from Sohar, and, Mâlik's demands for an area with pasture and water having been turned down, a mighty battle was joined at Salût (sp. Sallût?). Eventually the Persians sued for peace and a truce was agreed whereby they would evacuate Oman in a year. During this period the Arabs remained in the desert and mountain fringes, while the Persians laid waste the land and destroyed many of the *anhâr/ aflâj* of which Sulaymân b. Dâwûd had built 10,000. In the meantime the furious King Dâra sent reinforcements to Sohar, whereupon Mâlik, who himself had returned to Qalhât, advanced and a further battle ensued, in which the Persians used elephants and which resulted, after much heroics, in an Arab victory. Under cover of night the survivors made their escape by boat back to Persia. So Mâlik ruled wisely over Oman and many other Azd tribes began to arrive, as too the first Nizâr (Sâma b. Lu'ay).

#### (p.38) The *falaj* irrigation system

The following points may be noticed about this story. The first is the elaboration recorded by 'Awtabi about how Sulaymân b. Dâwûd miraculously had built the *anhâr = qanât*, the extraordinary underground irrigation system which is the basis of virtually all settlement in interior Oman. I have written extensively on this and do not intend repeating my discussion here, particularly as the origins of the *qanât* in Oman is presently a matter of hot debate, with new archaeological evidence indicating possibly autochthonous origins that go well back before the Achaemenid period, perhaps developing from as early as 1000 BC.<sup>12</sup> Some also maintain there is no firm evidence of that dynasty having exercised power in Oman, an argument that Potts rejects,<sup>13</sup> while Magee<sup>14</sup> points out that control of the peripheries of empire and its economic activities need not necessarily have been direct.

What seems reasonably clear, however, is that the original *qanât* settlement was on the western side of the mountains. Local tradition maintains that Izki is the oldest town in Oman, antedating Nizwâ by half-a-century,<sup>15</sup> and it has been tentatively identified with the city of Iske from where Pade, king of the land of Qadê (Oman), made a six-months' journey to Nineveh in 640 BC

bearing a rich tribute.<sup>16</sup> In the Bahlâ area Salût was clearly a centre of major importance (largely abandoned after the civil war at the end of the 3/9<sup>th</sup> century), for it was here legend reports that Sulaymân b. Dâwûd built the *falaj* system, and Mâlik did battle with the Persians. Further north, equally old, if not older, 'Dâwûdi' *qanât* were constructed in the piedmont zone,<sup>17</sup> with concentrations in two further major clusters, in the Sîrr ('Ibri area) and Tu'âm/Tuwâm (Buraimi oasis). All of which indicates a very ancient origin of the irrigation system, though just how old and how long it took to develop is an ongoing issue. Even more debatable is who Dâra b. Dâra b. Bahmân might be. Dâra b. Dâra would certainly point to the Achaemenids (Darius I and III), **(p.39)** but Bahmân was a mythical Sasanid ancestor; one thing is certain, though: any historical 'Arab' Mâlik b. Fahm did not come to Oman in Achaemenid times.

#### The early South Arabian connection

At least 1,000 years of history have been compressed into Mâlik b. Fahm's already long life of 120 years, while in local traditions traces of the third-millennium settled population in the Salût area were described to me as Mâlik b. Fahm graves! Essentially the theme that runs through this myth is the South Arabian connection with Oman. The start of the first millennium BC seems to mark a period of major socio-economic change in Oman. The camel was domesticated and became a means of long-distance transport and possibly warfare for the nomads. For the cultivators came a shift from dispersed settlement in gardens around wells tapping relatively shallow aquifers to the nucleated pattern of the *falaj* system.<sup>18</sup> Hints about these nomadic 'proto-Arabs', the *bâdiyya* whom Sulaymân b. Dâwûd found in occupation when he built the *qanât*, are to be found in the classical Arab sources which speak of ancient peoples and tribes that have disappeared: the Ṭasm, Jadîs, 'Amâlîq, and 'Âd (popular tradition holds the Mahra to be the vestiges that escaped God's wrath), as too early Semitic progenitors like Sâm b. Nûḥ and his grandson Şuḥâr b. 'Iram, and also first-generation descent of Qaḥṭân. The Greek authors also indicate that one of the three distinct groupings of peoples inhabiting the Omani Gulf Coast were the Sabae (Sabaeans?), while local traditions associate a site in Julfâr with Queen al-Zabbâ or Bilqîs (the Queen of Sheba).<sup>19</sup>

Specific evidence of early linkages between South Arabia and Oman come from tombstone inscriptions and coin finds at Mleiha (inland Sharja territory), dating perhaps from the fourth to the first centuries BC,<sup>20</sup> while similar tombstones in Hasa carry names, some of which have a certain similarity to those familiar to the Arab genealogists. Şuḥâr calls to mind Şuḥâr b. 'Iram; and would it be too far fetched to see a parallel between Jdhyt, daughter of Mlkt and Jadhîma b. Mâlik (b. Fahm), **(p.40)** *a fortiori* since Robin suggests the early inscription I found and Beeston read as 'King' might well be the name Malik? In any case, such similarities indicate how names from the earlier era might become transposed into the legendary history of the South Arabian Arabs. Other evidence of early South Arabian influence comes from graffiti on the Samad al-Sha'n pottery, an area which later saw considerable settlement by the Mâlik b. Fahm tribes. On the coast, the recent discovery of an inscription at Muweila (eastern UAE), dating between the extremes of 918 and 600 BC, pushes the coastal connection back 300 or 400 years, into the time of the earliest formation of Old South Arabian society.<sup>21</sup> This need not really surprise us. The Sur Jar'a text from western Iraq provides proof of trade between Saba and the Fertile Crescent by the mid-eighth century BC.<sup>22</sup>

So the archaeological, epigraphic, and numismatic evidence certainly points to some kind of early South Arabian presence in parts of Oman, and it is highly probable that if people associated with two politico-cultural groupings were seeking to establish themselves in the region, then the sort of conflict recorded in folklore as Mâlik b. Fahm fighting Dâra b. Dâra is to be expected. And just as such early history might have been assimilated into that of the first proper Arab migrations, so it is clear from the texts relating the eviction of the Sasanids from Oman that these too have segued into the story. Once stripped of its semi-legendary dressing, however, the actual Arab migration stream personified by Mâlik b. Fahm seems to go back to the first couple of centuries of the Christian era. The Salût battle probably represents the conflation of early brushes in the Parthian period with later events towards the end of the third century, when there is evidence that considerable areas of the southern Sasanid empire had broken away and a number of places, including Mazûn, are missing from the province lists of Kartir.<sup>23</sup>

### The Arab Settlement Pattern

The southern migration route: the Mâlik b. Fahm and associated Quḍâ'a and Ṭayy

But one thing the Omani sources are quite clear about: the earliest identifiably 'Arab' migrations were dominated by the Mâlik b. Fahm tribes and came via the southern coast of Arabia.

Reconstruction of their settlement (p.41) pattern show that their *dârs/dîras* (tribal territories) were in the peripheries of the main settled areas, initially in the Ja'lân. Today that name refers specifically to the area from the Bilâd B. Bû Ḥasan and Bilâd B. Bû 'Ali down to the coast, but originally it designated much of south-eastern Oman, including the Jabal Minqâl (then the name for the mountains behind Qalhât) and the lower settlements of present-day Sharqiyya<sup>24</sup> and Badiyya. This is in an area of uncertain rainfall and its irrigation system periodically fails, which is why its two main settlements during the period covered by this book were located high up the wadi system at Ibrâ and Samad (al-Sha'n). From this area, after the Battle of Salût perhaps, elements of the confederation moved northwards towards the peripheries of northern Oman and thence towards Bahrayn. That territorial distribution helps explain the confusing way the term *Azd 'Umân* is used in the classical sources. In fact it really designated the Mâlik and 'Amr b. Fahm nomads of the outer fringe who were the first to arrive in Oman and the last to come to Basra (see Chapter 4). Some groups, however, did establish territories around the main settlements, subsequently dispersing into secondary or even tertiary concentrations, a process that accelerated after the coming of Islam.<sup>25</sup> The case of the B. Ḥârith b. Mâlik b. Fahm will serve to illustrate this. One concentration was in the initial area of settlement in the south-east of the country. A further pre-Islamic area of Mâlik b. Fahm concentration found roots in the north in the Tuwâm area, where the clans of Khamâm (Shubâba), the shaikhly clans of the Ṣulaym ('Amr), and the Ḥadîd (Farâhîd, but possibly Shubâba) were influential, while the Ḥârith themselves established a position in the Dibâ area, from where a secondary dispersal on the Batina coast derived. The Ḥârith in general were on bad terms with the Farâhîd, themselves closely allied with the Salîma and Hinâ.

The Mâlik b. Fahm tribes were probably the most numerous in the Oman region, with some eleven major genealogical sub-groupings, whose *dârs* extended in a great arc from eastern Hadramawt through Dhofar to the Ja'lân, then along the western side of the mountains to the Dhahira and beyond to Bahrayn. Considerable numbers remained on the line of their migration route to the south-west of Oman, notably the majority of the Ma'n and the very large brother

'Amr b. Mâlik b. Fahm groupings to which they were probably allied, and of which the Judayd b. Hâdir of **(p.42)** the Şulaym were of particular importance.<sup>26</sup> Apparently the first Arabs to arrive in the Raysût area (Dhofar), then the key point between Aden and Oman, they subjected the local '*bayâsira*' population and were joined by other non-Mahri Arab groupings. Some time early in the Islamic era they were attacked by the B. Khanzirîr, part of the major Qamr-Riyâm Mahra sub-grouping. The survivors fled to Hâsik and Mirbaṭ in the territory of the Ghayth b. Mahra and with help from the Thugharâ b. Mahra recaptured the Raysût fort. The Khanzirîr in turn took refuge with the Riyâm/Riâm at their coastal centre called Ruḍâ': this was probably on the southern coast, for the Riyâm also initially concentrated in the Dhofar-Oman borderlands, and it was in this area that the Ibâdi missionary, Munîr b. al-Nayyir al-Riyâmi al-Ja'lâni, later proselytized.<sup>27</sup> But early on the Riyâm also took possession of their main mountain stronghold on the plateau of the Jabal al-Akhḍar, for Hamdâni adds to this account just quoted<sup>28</sup> that they had a mighty fort (*hiṣn*) in Oman from which they never budge (play on the root *rym*). This is clearly the same as 'Awtabi's 'impregnable mountain' (*jabal ḥaṣîn*) called the Jabal Riyâm.<sup>29</sup> That this Jabal Riyâm and the Jabal al-Akhḍar are identical is indicated by the Andalusian poet al-Sharîshi,<sup>30</sup> who records a description given by one of its inhabitants: 'there flows down from this mountain nine wadis, each of which has a route leading up to it: at their head are villages of the B. Riyâm, surrounding it and protecting it like the perianth of a fruit or the halo of the moon.'

So the Riyâm must have been a sizeable grouping, yet they only emerge as a major confederation of political importance in relatively modern times, and apart from Munîr b. al-Nayyir's mission, they scarcely, if at all, feature in the early history of the Imamate. Perhaps this eclipse was because they were of Mahri origin, albeit 'Awtabi rightly comments that there is considerable debate amongst the genealogists about how the Mahri groupings were related. Seemingly most important among those of supposedly non-Mahri Quḍâ'i origin were the Râsib, for they formed one of the five contingents (three of which were Azd) that joined the Fârs campaign (see Chapter 4). Yet they too receive no mention thereafter, and today are no more than a minor tribe in south-east Oman. A possible explanation is that the Râsib led the contingent of both Mahri and non-Mahri Quḍâ'i clans, but with the formation of the macro-scale Azd *khums* at Basra and the subsequent establishment of the Imamate they **(p.43)** were effectively assimilated into the main Azd tribal confederation. That may also explain the dubious alternative genealogy which actually makes them Azd, but very high up the family tree, Râsib b. Mayd'ân b. Mâlik, Mâlik also being the progenitor of Mayd'ân's brother from whom descend the Mâlik b. Fahm and Shanu'a (as also the Ghâmid and Thumâla).<sup>31</sup> All of which confirms that the Quḍâ'a and Azd very much formed a Yamani grouping, closely associated with the pure Mahra. Another reason for effacement may be that the Mahra of the Omani borderlands were allies of the Julandâ and during the First Imamate were largely driven out of Oman.

Within south-eastern Oman itself a Farâhîd Mâlik b. Fahm confederation (the Muwâzi') occupied the area from 'Ja'lân to al-Qurâ [probably the present-day Bilâds B. Bu 'Ali and B. Bu Ḥasan area in the Wadi Baṭḥâ] and al-Qâ [probably the Mudayrib and Mintirib village clusters]', whilst the al-Hârith and Jahâdim were further into the Sharqiyya proper, and the Bani Salîma in the mountains behind Qalhât. The B. Hinâ, however, seem to have moved on into the northern Jawf, perhaps following their success against the Persians at Salût, and by early Islamic times at least had an important secondary concentration in the Lower Wadi Sumâyil. It is the Hinâ who



provided the leaders of all the Arab tribes until the arrival of the Shanu 'a, and they continued to be of considerable importance both in Oman and Basra and Khurâsân until Abbasid times. Farâhîd was another very important 'son' in early history, and along with the Salîma prominent in activating the Ibâdî movement. However, the Mâlik b. Fahm tribes were widely distributed and the paramount leadership was not without challenge. There was a major dispute between Hinâ and Ma 'n, which resurfaced in Mas 'ûd b. 'Amr al-Ma 'ni's attempted putsch at Basra in 64. Its origins go back to the story of Salîma, whose special status is symbolized by the precedence given to his offspring by Mâlik b. Fahm's marriage to the daughter of Mâlik b. Zuhayr, and the account of how Salîma accidentally shot his father. In the resulting ructions among the 'brothers', Hinâ supported Salîma against Ma 'n, while Tha 'laba was so disgusted that he left and joined the Tanûkh. As a result, part of the Ma 'n broke away and established themselves in the uplands (*hijâz*) between Oman and al-Shihr, and it is significant that it was from this grouping that Mas 'ûd b. 'Amr came.

**(p.44)** According to the semi-legendary stories,<sup>32</sup> Salîma quit Oman first for Jashk Island on the Persian coast, where he married a woman of the Isfâhiyya (cf. Spahi) by whom he had a son, Bistimûn, whose descent, the B. Isfâhiyya, became the dominant family of the region. Moving on to Kirmân he contracted another marriage with the local royal family, adopting their name (Karkar?), and after various adventures ended up ruler, helped by his brother Hinâ who came with 3,000 Azdi horsemen. After Salîma died in Kirmân, his ten sons quarrelled and dispersed, with some remaining influential in Kirmân, but the majority settling in Fârs where, *inter alia*, they were the lords of Jabal al-Qufş. All of which indicates that the Salîma became predominant in the mixed Arabo-Persian tribal population on the Persian side of the southern Gulf, and it was their exactions that doubtless led them to be identified with the piratical kings referred to in the Qur'ân (XVIII, 60-82). In due course, probably in late Sasanid times, the leaders of the most important family were nominated as Julandâ, and members of this Julandâ b. Karkar family remained of the greatest importance in all the period that concerns us. Interestingly enough, Iştakhri and 'Awtabi also claim that the 'B. Şaffâq/Şaffâr', kings of Merw, that is, the Şaffârids, were of Julandâ b. Karkar origins.<sup>33</sup> 'Awtabi emphasizes that the Salîma were particularly strong supporters of al-Muhallab in his war against the Azâriqa, and this should be borne in mind when considering the early campaigns in Fârs, where the Omani contingents were doubtless joined by the mixed Arabo-Persian groupings, although nothing is said to this effect in the histories. Some Salîma did return to the Jabal Minqâl, whose local port was Qalhât, and were to play a significant role in the development of the Hormuz-Qalhât axis in the thirteenth century.

But in early Islamic times the politically significant Omani grouping were found at Majazz, a few kilometres below Sohar, which they shared with a Farâhîd section. They were amongst the first Omanis to join the Imam Ẓâlib al-Ḥaqq and were very much to the fore later in the Omani civil war on the 'Yaman' side. Their continuing close relations with the Salîma on the Persian coast is demonstrated by the fact that the tribal shaikh and his family took refuge with the Julandâ b. Karkar following the Caliphate invasion, and he, and then his son, were made governors over Hurmuz by al-Sakri, Şâhib Huzwa (= Huzû).

In the south-eastern mountains the Salîma's neighbours were the Ẓayy (correctly Ẓayyi' *nisba* Ẓâ'iy), who originally were closely associated with the Azd in their homelands. After the Sayl al-Aram, the 'sons' of 'Udad b. Zayd b. Yashjab moved into the Tihâma, but as a result of a **(p.45)**

quarrel the Ṭayy left for Hijaz and one group finally ended up in the Jabalayn (Ajâ' and Salmâ, Jabal Shammar), with a further partial migration into the Aleppo–Qinnasrîn area. In due course they became partisans of Mu'âwiya, and consequently implacable enemies of the Omanis, providing part of the forces used for the 'Abbasid invasion of Oman. Some descent of Nabhân b. Ghawth b. Ṭayy, on the other hand, migrated (probably with the Mâlik b. Fahm) via Shiḥr to end up in south-east Oman, where they settled to the north of the B. Salîma, in the Wadi Ṭayyîn and Sayḥ Hattât area, on the eastern side of the Sumâyil Gap.<sup>34</sup>

### Migrations Via Al-Bahrayn

#### 'Abd al-Qays

While the drift of Mâlik b. Fahm and associated tribes into Oman via southern Arabia may have continued until early Islamic times, the main migrations died away, and all ensuing waves of any importance, Azd and non-Azd alike, came via Yamâma and Bahrayn, entering Oman through the Tu'âm/Tuwâm gateway, that is the first major area of settlement inland from the coastal region of Julfâr or Jullafâr/Jurrafâr, and spreading down to the next major focus of settlement in the Sirr (see Map 3). Consequently, while few back linkages between the Omani tribes and their area of origin in south-western Arabia subsisted, quite the opposite was true in the north, where migrations from Bahrayn continued into relatively modern times and resulted in complex relations between the two regions. The first to move into Bahrayn and spread into the northern borderlands of Oman, or northwards towards Iraq, were bedouin 'Abd al-Qays. Although the Arabo-Muslim sources speak of their being in Bahrayn in Shâpûr II's reign, the Abadân inscription (see Chapter 1) shows that many were still nomadizing in the Najd, and it was perhaps their severe defeat there which accelerated their move eastwards, where they came into contact with the Mâlik b. Fahm-Quḍâ'a. The good relationship established is represented by the story of how the 'Abdi leader's panegyric of Mâlik b. Fahm was rewarded by him being appointed his *wazîr* and his people given the right to establish themselves in his territory. It was reinforced by common enemies, notably the B. Sa'd Tamîm, as too the 'Âmir b. Ṣa'ṣa'a, whom the 'Abd al-Qays confined to Yamâma until (p.46) Qarâmiṭa times. Thus 'Abdi groupings, mostly from the Lukayz, formed the main bedu groupings in the desert regions extending from the Gulf coast to the Sirr for most of the period covered by this book. Very full accounts of the tribe's distribution are given in the classical sources,<sup>35</sup> but most details need not concern us. The impression given is that although some 'Abdis did settle, they remained primarily bedouin, living in the piedmont plains, with the Dîl dominant in the Tuwâm area and B. Ḥârith of the Ammâr in the Dhahira, rivals of the Jadhîma (b. 'Awf b. Ammâr) who occupied the main al-Khaṭṭ coast of Bahrayn. Other Ammâr groupings lived in the sands of Hajar, Qatar, and Baynûna, where they started to overlap with their enemies the B. Saṭd. But the majority of ṭAbd al-Qays were located in Bahrayn, and their importance there is summed up by Ibn Faḳîh (p. 28), who generalizes that al-Yamâma belonged to the B. Ḥanîfa, al-Baḥrayn to the 'Abd al-Qays, and al-Jazîra to the B. Taghlib.

So the two main Bahrayni contingents in the initial Fârs campaign were made up of 'Abd al-Qays and Azd al-Baḥrayn, and their good relations persisted until deliberately sundered in 'Abbasid times. Their alliance with the Mâlik b. Fahm Azd thus reinforced that of Rabî'a with Kinda, who in turn were closely associated with the Shanu'a Azd in Oman, whose own alliance incorporated the Omani Ṭayy. Although the Bakr b. Wâ'il (Rabî'a) were themselves absent from

Oman,<sup>36</sup> it was this old confederation structure that Mâlik b. Misma' of the Bakr b. Wâ'il tried to resuscitate in the line-up at Basra in 64 AH.<sup>37</sup>

#### The 'Imrân Azd and B. Sâma

The first Azd to come via central Arabia and Bahrayn were the 'Imrân, who, as a result of a dispute with other Mâzin groups, migrated with two sons, Ḥajr and Asd, leaving only a small section in Sarât. Like all tribes coming via Bahrayn,<sup>38</sup> those entering Oman initially concentrated in the north before starting to spread along the desert interior as far as the Sharqiyya, mixing as they went with the earlier arrivals. The dominance established by the 'Imrân in northern Oman found itself challenged by **(p.47)** the next set of arrivals, the potentially much more disruptive B. Najw or Nâjiyya of B. Sâma descent, the core grouping of the Omani Nizâr. Their claim to be Sâma b. Lu'ay was disputed by other Lu'ay clans (which include Quraysh), and is probably why the classical sources nearly always refer to them as Nâjiyya, a name deriving from the history of the tribe's dispersal. As a result of killing (wounding?) one of his brothers, Sâma had to flee Mecca with his followers.<sup>39</sup> On arriving on the Bahrayn coast he, or his son al-Ḥârith, married Hind bt. Jarm of the Quḍâ'a who carried on with him towards Oman. Dying of thirst in this most arid of regions, she was 'saved' by Sâma finding water, hence she and her descent became known as Nâjiyya. On arriving at Tuwâm, Sâma came up against the Khamâm (shaikhly section of the Shubâba b. Mâlik b. Fahm), and confrontation seemed likely until 'Imrân was successful in forming an alliance by marrying his son Asd to Hind bt. Sâma. From their marriage came the 'Atîk, important leaders of the Azd in Basra, to which the Muhallabids assimilated, and forebears of the Nabâhina. Unfortunately there is a huge lacuna in 'Awtabi and of Ḥajr's descent we know little, except that it included numerous clans deriving from Sawd b. Hajr, one of which produced the leader who overthrew Julandâ rule and himself later became Imam. A rather distinctive group of the B. Sawd<sup>40</sup> were the Ṭâḥiyya (Ṭâḥi), who feature quite prominently in the earliest Islamic period, notably in Basra: 'Awtabi's own forebears, who played a role in the civil war, were apparently from this same grouping, from the 'Awtab quarter in Sohar.

As allies both of the Nâjiyya and strong supporters of the B. Hinâ shaikhs, the 'Imrân leadership became a keystone in Omani tribal structure. But internally they seem to have been something of a hotchpotch and their noble attachments to other supposed descendants of 'Amr Muzayqiyyâ' outside Oman may be largely ignored, except to note that there were clans related to the powerful Bâriq confederation in Sarât. The group that matters politically is the 'Atîk, who played an extremely important role in the Azd leadership both in Oman and Basra. Their capital in early Islamic times was probably in the Hamrâ region (see Chapter 8) and they had an important branch living in Hijâr, near Sohar.

Nothing else survives in 'Awtabi concerning the Sâma/Nâjiyya, but details in the histories provide material to reconstruct their general picture of settlement. The main part of the tribe concentrated in northern Oman (Tuwâm and Sirr), with some on the Persian coast opposite (Âl Abû Zuhayr). From the Sirr the B. Ghâfir spread from the Wadi **(p.48)** al-Kabîr to occupy the Wadi B. Ghâfir draining towards the Ghadaf, where they came under Yaḥmad (Shanu'a Azd) influence, with a resulting switch of loyalties that manifested itself in the line-up during the first civil war.<sup>41</sup> Some Nâjiyya made their way to eastern Oman, but much more significant for Ibâḍi history is that a shaikhly Sâmi family settled in the Jawf, at 'Aqr Nizwâ, and an associated clan,

the B. ʿAbba (not to be confused with the Muḍar homonym) at Izki (the 'Uzûr) and Manaḥ: two of the original four Ibâḍi missionaries came from these families and their descendants effectively became Imam-makers in the First Imamate. Indeed, the historian might like to ponder whether it is simply coincidence that the later Mushâḥiṣa, Umbu Sa'îd, and Sawâlim were all of Sâma-ʿAbba descent, and it was a Shaqṣi who established the Ya'âruba Imamate in the sixteenth century, the Umbu Sa'îd who had the first Al Bu Sa'îdi ruler (no relation) elected as Imam in the eighteenth, and that a Sâlimi re-established the Imamate in the twentieth, all with Imams from Azd descent.

Despite these alliances, the Sâma remained very much apart from the Yamanis, producing their own contingent in the first Islamic campaigns, taking the opposite side at the Battle of the Camel, and finally being incorporated in the 'Âliya *khums*, not the Azdi. It was their leader at the Camel, Khirrît b. Râshid al-Nâji, who broke with 'Ali to raise a sort of quasi-Khârijî revolt that ended in Oman in 38/658-9.

#### The Shanu'a Azd and Kinda

The centrepiece in the pre-Islamic alliances, however, was formed by a new wave of Azd migrants, Shanu'a clans of the 'Uthmân b. Naṣr b. Ẓahrân b. Ka'b, some of whom left the uplands of the Sarât and Hijaz. Passing through al-'Arûḍ into Yamâma, they gained a degree of ascendancy over the settled<sup>42</sup> B. Ḥanîfa, but were resisted by the nomadic 'Âmir b. Ṣa'sa'a, before moving into Bahrayn where they raided the people of the coast. Eventually they began to establish themselves in Oman. Genealogically, they divided into two major blocs, the four 'sons' known as the Awlad Shams/Shums, from whom the then politically dominant Ma'âwil and numerically important Ḥuddân arose, and the Yaḥmad (b. 'Abdullâh, known as Hummâ).<sup>43</sup> There were also some elements of the Anmar/Ammar Shanu'a in Oman, but the majority, along with all the Ghâlib b. 'Uthmân, remained in the Hijaz. The Shanu'a were (p.49) almost certainly the last of the major Azd migrations, and as such they retained quite genuine attachments with clans in western Arabia. The fact that they settled in the mountain zone with a different life-style from the earlier migrants,<sup>44</sup> who largely lived in the desert foreland, and took over the overall Azd leadership, accounts for the distinction, sneeringly made, between Shanu'a and Azd 'Umân. And it is significant that the person who made the remark comparing the Shanu'a to a sound leg and the Azd 'Umân to a lame one was a Bâriḳi Azdi, Surâqa b. Mirdâs, from western Arabia.<sup>45</sup>

This Shanu'a migration formed part of a notable Arabization of eastern Arabia during the fifth century AD, and was associated with the establishment of Kinda control, first in central Arabia and then during the second half of the century in Bahrayn and the former Lakhmid provinces of north-central and north-east Arabia. This latter phase overlapped with the rule of Kubadh I (Kawâdh) and an apocalyptic period following the death of Yazdagird II, with seven years of famine, 'land reform', and the defeat of the Sasanids by the Hephthalites (White Huns). It is debatable how far Kawâdh (488-96, 498 or 499-531) was so weak a ruler as the Arab sources make out, but the disputed succession, his adoption of revolutionary Mazdaki heresy, his deposing, his restoration with the help of the Hephthalites, and then his four-year war with Byzantium at the end of his reign meant he had little time to concern himself with Arabia. It was during his reign that al-Ḥârith b. al-'Amr al-Kindi, who had already gained control of parts of the Iraqi borderlands some twenty years earlier, was able to expel the Lakhmids from Hira between roughly 525 and 528.<sup>46</sup> He may well have been instigated to do so by Kawâdh himself, who,

angered at Mundhir III's refusal to accept Mazdaki doctrine, offered to recognize al-Ḥârith in his place.

This marks a new phase in the abandonment of Sasanid interest on the Arab side of the Gulf, which seems to be confirmed by archaeological evidence.<sup>47</sup> Shâpûr had tried to check the Arabs by force, but his concern was primarily with preventing their incursions into the confines of Iraq and Khûzistân, and even into Fârs. Hira, on the other hand, was on the margin of the Sawâd whose cultivated area the Sasanids were expanding and could be controlled relatively easily. So the policy became one of keeping the increasing number of Arabs in check indirectly. There is no evidence that Hira rule had hitherto extended to Oman, but Imru'l-Qays (d. c. 540) claims that it did under al-Ḥârith. Indirect rule from Hira continued after al-Mundhir b. Nu'mân (505–54) regained control there in 528, **(p.50)** killing al-Ḥârith, and when Kisra Anûshiravân acceded to the Persian throne he appointed the Lakhmid king over his territories in Arabia, including Oman; how long that rule lasted and how nominal it was are open questions. Nevertheless, the Lakhmid restoration marked the end of the 'royal' power of the Kinda dynasty, while fratricidal disputes and inter-tribal conflicts in the Najd and Yamâma led to the collapse of their clans' authority in central Arabia. In their homeland in southern Arabia they converted to the sort of Judaism embraced by Ḥimyar, and we next really come across them in Arab history around the time of the conversion to Islam, when al-Ash'ath b. Qays b. Ma'di-Karib, of a collateral 'royal' branch, became a significant figure.

It may have been this collapse of Kinda authority in central Arabia, with which the Shanu'a Azd were associated, that led some clans to come to Oman and settle in the mountain zone to the north of their Azd allies in what became called the Jabal Kinda, although Hamdâni hints<sup>48</sup> that some came direct from southern Arabia. Probably as a result of the demise of Kinda authority the importance of the Shanu'a Azd developed and the Ma'âwil emerged to prominence. The first recognizably historical forebear of the Julandâ family was four generations back from the Julandâ who died c. 10/631–2. It was this Ma'wali, 'Abd'Izz, who is recorded as raiding the sealand (ahl *al-'ubâb*) and, once in Oman, appointed Bâqil b. Shâri b. Yahmad, brother of the B. Kharûṣ eponym, Kharûṣ b. Shâri, as Ṣâhib al-'Arûḍ<sup>49</sup> to collect the tax by force from Bahrayn and Yamâma with the help of 'Amr b. 'Amr al-Ḥanafi.<sup>50</sup> Which again indicates a period of indirect Persian control in eastern Arabia, and why perhaps Kisra appointed a military governor to reinforce his Hira appointee.<sup>51</sup> Whatever the case, the fact is that the Shanu'a and their Kinda allies managed to penetrate right into the mountain zone,<sup>52</sup> thus avoiding conflict with the territories of the earlier Arab migrants.

However, the Shanu'a *dârs* do not conform to their genealogical treatment, and since their territorial divisions were to play an essential part in the cataclysm that brought to an end the First Imamate and the eventual abandonment of Ibâḍism in northern Oman, it is from this geographical **(p.51)** perspective that it will be briefly described. The Shanu'a as a whole dominated the central Omani mountains. The Ḥuddân occupied the Jabal Ḥuddân, behind the Sohar region on the coastal side, and on the other the hill country between the northern Jawf and the upper valleys of the SIRR. There Yanqul became their main centre, but by early Islamic times they had also become dominant in the then-important agricultural area of Salût, downstream of Bahlâ. In the course of time they built up a powerful alliance with other Azd

groupings of the area, notably the Ḥajr 'Imrân, the B. al-Ḥârith Mâlik b. Fahm, and the B. Sâma, and this was to form the basis of a northern regional grouping that was later to tear Oman apart.

Although there were Ma'âwil who settled with the rest of the Awlâd Shams in the Sirr and Jabal Ḥuddân, their primary *dâr* lay downstream of Nakhal,<sup>53</sup> and were consequently neighbours of the Yaḥmad, whose clans dominated the main mountain bloc forming the coastal side of the Jabal al-Akhḍar, the Jabal Yaḥmad,<sup>54</sup> probably little settled at this stage (see below). However, while the names of the Wadis B. Ma'âwil, Kharûṣ, Saḥtan, B. Ghâfir, and so on indicate part of the early tribal geography, the close association of the Ma'âwil and some other local Awlâd Shams clans with those of the Yaḥmad makes it pointless to try and disentangle them. What matters is that, despite internal rivalry, these Shanu'a tribes formed the basis of an extremely powerful regional confederation after the Persians had been driven out, with the Yaḥmad in possession of the great fortified centre of Rustâq, and dominating both the eastern mountains and the Batina coast. After Julandâ (Ma'âwil) rule was replaced by that of the Imamate in 177/793, it was from the Yaḥmad (Fajḥ, Kharûṣ, Khalîlis) that virtually all Imams were chosen, and in the later great phase of Imamate expansion under the Ya'âruba the Rustâq area was again the key to power.

#### Kinda

Before discussing further this change in leadership, something more must also be said about their allies the Kinda,<sup>55</sup> who occupied the northernmost mountain bloc, above the Jabal Ḥuddân, with their main centres at Shawka, Ḥattâ (probably their capital), and the Wadi Madḥa.<sup>56</sup> Here the range is less wide, albeit still a formidable barrier, so their command of **(p.52)** the Wadis Ḥattâ, Qawr, and Hâm controlled the access from Julfâr, on the Gulf side of the mountains, to the narrow Shimâliyya coastal strip that marks the northern end of the Batina coast, along with the isolated coastal ports on the Indian Ocean side of the Musandam Peninsula, including Dabâ/Dibâ, the main 'Arab' port and *sûq al-'arab* of pre-Islamic times.

The Kinda divided into three primary groupings deriving from al-Thawr, nicknamed Kinda: Mu'âwiya and two descendants of his brother Ashras, the Sakûn and Sakâsîk. In the genealogies, backed by the epigraphic evidence, the mother of both Mu'âwiya and Ashras was a granddaughter of Rabi'a (see Chapter 1). The Sakâsîk are entirely absent from Oman, but there are some Sakûn,<sup>57</sup> possibly arriving direct from Hadramawt, and of some political importance; the mother of 'Abbâd al-Julandâ, one of the rulers in the first century of Islam, was a Sakûni, as too, possibly, was Muḥammad b. Mu'allâ, the Kindi missionary who originated in the village of Fash (today Fashḥ) in the upper Wadi Saḥtan ('Amq bowl). But otherwise the great majority were Mu'âwiya, either from the al-Ḥârith al-Akbar or from a rival branch, al-Ḥârith al-Aṣghar (b. Mu'âwiya Akrimîn b. al-Ḥârith al-Akbar). The Kinda royal family stemmed from the 'Amr b. al-Ḥârith al-Akbar, but the position of the Ḥujrids was usurped in the Hadramawt by the Walî'a, descending from Âkil Murâr's brother, al-Ḥârith Wallâda. They were challenged by an al-Ḥârith al-Aṣghar family to which Ma'dikarib, known as al-Ash'ath b. Qays, belonged.

The rivalry between the two great Mu'âwiya branches is evident in Oman too.<sup>58</sup> In the primary *dâr* the B. Thâbit b. Rafd (al-Ḥârith al-Akbar) displaced the al-Ḥârith al-Aṣghar shaikhly clan (B. Ḥabîb of the Sad'b. al-Arqam b. Nu'mân<sup>59</sup>) at their capital, Ḥattâ. But while the main tribal *dâr*

was more or less under their leadership, the most prominent Kinda families about whom 'Awtabi gives considerable details all descend from al-Ḥârith al-Aşghar. Although some B. Ḥabib stayed in the Jabal Kinda, others went to join their al-Ḥârith al-Aşghar relations (the descent of Mâlik b. Imru'l-Qays), who had made the Wadi Ḍank area their homeland, and settled at Dawt: some also landed up in Kirshâ (between Manaḥ and Nizwâ). Other elements had either originally migrated with, or subsequently moved to join, their Shanu'a Azd allies in the Ghadaf, where 'Awtabi states they had become 'the people of 'Ayni in Rustâq al-Yahmad' and Sawni (modern 'Aw âbi). Some of the Wadi Ḍank al-Ḥârith al-Aşghar (p.53) grouping, who held the main fort at Fidâ in his time, moved to Kudam and al-Qurya (modern al-Ḥamrâ area), from where they spread via the Wadi B. 'Awf into the Ghadaf on the other side of the main chain to gain control of Nakhal.<sup>60</sup> But the most famous Omani clan stemmed from a related section, the B. Sayyâr of Samad Nizwâ (sometimes called Samad al-Kindi, Upper Nizwâ), and it was they who were to produce the 'ulamâ' who compiled those massive Ibâḍî works of the Rustâq school, the *Bayân al-Shar'*, the *Musannaf*, and so on.

In this abbreviated description of the Kinda as given by 'Awtabi we are clearly dealing with specific families and can see how prominent clans had moved away from the primary tribal area and taken control of important settlements or forts in the core of Oman during the period that concerns us. While the majority of tribesmen and assimilated elements remained in the primary *dâr* and an area of secondary settlement in the Wadi Ḍank (where they were neighbours of the Ḥuddân), others had settled, perhaps *ab initio*, in the Ghadaf, dominated by the Yaḥmad. But as the latter's unity broke up in the aftermath of the civil war, they emerged as leaders in very significant fortified settlements of the Ghadaf, Nakhal, Sawni (al-'Awâbi), and 'Ayni-Rustâq. On the inner side of the mountains the Kinda similarly established themselves in Nizwâ, temporarily in the Manaḥ and Ḥamrâ areas, while also maintaining their foothold in the Ḍank region. This integration of the Kinda in the area of Azd domination was to play a vital role in the political geography of the early Ibâḍî movement in Oman. Their relationship is summed up in the statement that whereas the Kharûş (Yaḥmad) were the source for the *imâma* the Kunûd were that of *fiqh*.<sup>61</sup>

But we can also see how closely the Omani groups were related to the Kinda in Hadramawt, and in particular to the al-Ḥârith al-Aşghar clans to which al-Ash'ath belonged. Since his grandfather's time his family had challenged the Walî'a, and it was in the aftermath of the *rida* that al-Ash'ath finally established his position as 'king' of Kinda. The Mu'âwiya hegemony however, was resented by the Ashras (that is, the Sakûn and Sakâsîk), inhabiting the less fertile borderlands between Lower Yemen and Upper Wadi Hadramawt,<sup>62</sup> as also by the tribes designated Ḥaḍramawt in the early sources (possibly the same thing as the Ḥaḍârim in Oman). This was reflected in the poor relations between the Kûfan Kinda and those of Ḥimş, mostly Ashras, but also with a Mu'âwiya group inimical (p.54) to al-Ash'ath. On the other hand there were close ties between the Azd and Kinda in Iraq, where al-Ash'ath, who had married Abû Bakr's sister, Umm Farwa, and taken part in the battles of Yarmuk and Qâdisi-yya, emerged as the leader at Kûfa, the Iraqi *mişr* for the tribal *ashrâf* originating from southern Arabia. There the Kinda absorbed the lesser Hadrami tribes and those mostly western Azd based there. Similarly in Basra, Hadrami-Omani ties were reinforced, and the Kinda lived in the Azd khums.<sup>63</sup> So after 'Abd al-Raḥmân b. Muḥammad (Ibn al-Ash'ath), who raised the first great

Iraqi revolt against 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwân and Hajjaj, was defeated, followed by the second great tribal revolt of the Azd under Yazîd b. al-Muhallab, it is not altogether surprising to find these two great Yamani confederations eventually finding common ground in Ibâdî ideology and forming a joint Omani-Hadrami force to establish a Kindi, 'Abdullâh b. Yaḥyâ (Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq), as the first Imam in southern Arabia. Nor that it was a Kindi missionary who took part in the revolt that led to establishing the Ibâdî state in Oman under an Azdi Imam, and that it was a Tujîbi, probably from the Sakûn of Egypt, who was the first to lead an Ibâdî uprising in the Maghrib.

#### The tribal power structure

With this influx of Shanu'a and Kinda, the paramount authority of the B. Hinâ passed to the Ma'wali shaikh, seemingly quite willingly, for their loyalty to the Julandâ family continued even after the coming of Islam, to the extent that some mistakenly suppose the Julandâ family to be Hinâ'i.<sup>64</sup> The Hinâ remained the key for good relations with the Salîma of southeastern Oman and the lower Persian coast of the Gulf (part of Greater Kirmân), and they were on good terms too with the 'Atîk, the dominant group in the 'Imrân. That essentially was the basis of the Azd alliance, which more or less politically assimilated the Qudâ a groups and possibly the Ṭayy. The Mâlik b. Fahm were also allied with the 'Abd al-Qays, the 'Imrân with the B. Nâjiyya (Sâma), and the Shanu'a with the Kinda. To some extent this accommodation was possible without too much friction because apparently each wave of migrants had more or less carved out tribal areas in hitherto unoccupied marginal land with little conflict of interest, except in the initial point of entry in Tuwâm. All sources accord in the view that the Arabs before the coming of Islam were primarily nomads, and for the moment we may take this statement at its face value. So, on the western side of the mountains, in the sand country around the Empty Quarter, certain Mâlik b. Fahm and 'Abd al-Qays nomads would **(p.55)** have lived primarily as camel-herders. In the piedmont zone of outwash fans a pulsatory nomadism of mixed camel and small livestock probably characterized the other Mâlik b. Fahm and 'Abdi groupings, as too the 'Imrân and B. Nâjiyya. In the mountains the terrain lent itself to essentially small livestock and perhaps some cultivation in the wadi basins. That presumably formed the basic economy of the last major migration wave, the Ḥuddân, Yaḥmad, Kinda, as well as some of the earlier arrivals, Qamr-Riyâm perhaps, and the Salîma and Ṭayy in south-eastern Oman. But there were also probably elements from all the tribes that were occupied in small-scale agriculture, while the importance of breeding horses for military purposes should not be overlooked either.<sup>65</sup>

#### Relations with the Persians

##### **Arḍ al-Hind**

While the above gives some idea of the internal structure of Arab tribal relations and the role they were to play in Islamic times, the picture was strongly influenced by the development of Sasanid maritime commerce in what the early Arab geographers called the *Arḍ al-Hind*,<sup>66</sup> and the fundamental changes in territorial administration brought about by Kisra Anûshiravân (Chosro I, 531-79). There seems to be little evidence of any real Sasanid fleet. Fârs was the most important commercial province, but control of trade was essentially exercised through the merchants' home ports. Procopius sums up the situation when he wrote that it was 'impossible for the Ethiopians to buy silk from the Indians, for the Persian merchants always locate themselves at the very harbours where the Indian ships first put in ... and are accustomed to buy the whole cargoes'.<sup>67</sup> However, in the late Sasanid period, when competition grew with Byzantium, allied to Abyssinia, that loose hold was reinforced by a degree of direct military



occupation, notably in Oman, and whilst there may have been no regular navy, the Sasanids were certainly in a position to commandeer ships. The expedition against Yemen came by sea, while in the early days of the Islamic campaigns against Fârs it has been argued<sup>68</sup> that it was the ability of the Sasanids to supply its forts from the Gulf and even cut off Ḥakam b. Abi'l-'Âṣ from the Arabian Peninsula that made the Fârs campaign so long.

**(p.56)** This concept of the land of 'Hind' represents the integration during the first centuries AD of Gulf commerce with the patterns of maritime trade dictated by the monsoonal winds in the northern Indian Ocean; to Sind, the western Indian coast (Hind), and as far even as Ceylon on the one side, and to southern Arabia ('Umân and al-Shiḥr) and marginally to Zanj (East Africa) on the other. The Indian wing was by far the more important, for East African expansion occurred principally in Islamic times. Further networks extended trade to the Malayan Peninsula and China, and on the western wing towards the Red Sea, which itself opened onto a whole subset of commerce with Abyssinia, the Nile Valley, the Mediterranean, and perhaps overland from the Arabian coast to Shâm. In this Red Sea axis the Byzantine empire sought to establish itself and break into the zone of Sasanid mastery.

The core Sasanid interest lay in Iraq, Fârs, and Kirmân (with its hinterland of Seistan and Khurâsân). The Arab side of the Gulf, by contrast was marginalized and largely abandoned to the tribes. It was of little value, except perhaps for pearling, then essentially concentrated in Bahrayn waters.<sup>69</sup> At the head of the Gulf, Obollah/Ubullah served Iraq, Khûzistân, and the northern Persian plateau and Bal'ami's remarks (iii. 401, see Chapter 1) indicate that when the Basra *miṣr* was founded there was already a considerable population of probably largely detribalized Omanis living in reed and straw huts along the banks of the Shaṭṭ. The main Sasanid port for Fârs was Rêv Ardashîr (Rîshahr; Bushire area),<sup>70</sup> which received new stimulus when Bahram V (Bahram Gur, 421-38) married an Indian princess and received as dowry Daybul. It also became the seat of the Nestorian metropolitan who was responsible for the Christian community on both sides of the Gulf, India, and beyond to Sîrandîb (the main port of Ceylon), described by Cosmas in the early sixth century as a busy entrepot handling goods from China, South East Asia, the Deccan, and Sind. There may have been direct contact between China and the Gulf, but most trade passed through Ceylon.

But to control effectively this trade the Persians needed an entrepot 'outside' the Gulf, beyond the Strait of Hormuz, in or near the main shipping routes. Sohar (Şuḥâr)<sup>71</sup> lay some 500 km above the main monsoon wind circulation system, and was central to both the Indian and African wings. Located at the northern end of the Batina coastal strip, rich in fishing and with a considerable agricultural potential, Sohar's favourable hydrology near the mouths of the Wadis al-Jizzi and Şulân gave it a major **(p.57)** agricultural hinterland, in the same way as the Wadi Sumâyil mouth favoured development of Damâ at the other end of the Batina. Sohar also served as the local port for the Tuwâm area, to which it was linked by the Wadi al-Jizzi, the main source for Omani copper whose production continued well into the Islamic period. It therefore had access both to central Oman (the Sîrr and Jawf) and the Gulf coastal region of Julfâr. Later, the Omani entrepot moved to the south-east coast, first Qalhât and then Muscat (see Chapter 13), but in late Sasanid times and most of the period with which we are concerned a position proximate to the Gulf was essential, since so much trade passed to Iraq and Fârs. Sohar was also well sited for the Makrân coast opposite, as well as for dealing with any pirate lairs in the

creeks round the Musandam Peninsula. Control over the entrance to the Gulf may well have been helped through the network of the Julandâ b. Karkar (B. Salîma) families. Sohar thus began to develop an important entrepot commerce, although its major growth was stimulated by Islamic trade and reached its apogee in the Bûyid period. It also became the Sasanid capital in Oman, with a permanent military force based on its fortified quarter at Dastajird (a common name, possibly indicating a Sasanid official possession).

Trade in this *Arđ al-Hind* was essentially supranational and broke down barriers between the local inhabitants. Arabs, Persians, and Indians were drawn into a single commercial network so that no discrimination between race, tribe, or religion was permitted to disrupt trade, whilst the local population were impressed into the marine: whence Abû 'Ubayda's jibe about the Azd being forced into Sasanid maritime service and other slighting references to their being sailors. Maritime trade had also to be physically protected, as witness the recurrence of piratical attacks by the *bawârij* of the Makrân coast and the Rajah of Sind after the old Persian organization broke down in the first century of Islam. One of the groups that retained a specific identity in the early history of Basra was the *Siyâbija* (the Arabized form of their name), who appear to have been a people of Sind employed by the Sasanids as guards against pirates, and they also recruited the Zuţţ, also seemingly originating in Sind, as auxiliary forces;<sup>72</sup> subsequently they were used by the Ibâdis. Towards the Red Sea, however, Sasanid influence was disputed with Byzantium, which made efforts in the first quarter of the sixth century to develop influence over the Judaicized Ĥimyarite kingdom through Axumite (Ethiopian) influence and the considerable Christian population of southern Arabia. The consequent massacre of the Christians led to an Axumite invasion from which Abraha finally emerged as the quasi-independent king of the old Ĥimyar state. However, Byzantine-Axumite influence remained **(p.58)** uncertain during Justinian's time (527-65), and appeal was made to Kisra Anûshiravân. The result was that the Abyssinians were driven out by the Wahrîz invasion and the Ĥimyarite Kingdom became a satrapy of the Sasanids, though there may have been a second reconquest in Kisra II's time.<sup>73</sup>

It was this situation that was partly responsible for Anûshiravân establishing a new policy in Arabia. Straightforward military suppression and brutality, as manifested by Shâpûr II (309-79) who herded his prisoners by piercing their shoulders (hence his Arab sobriquet, *Dhû'l-aktâf*), was no longer sufficient, *a fortiori* with the ever expanding Arab migrations that had now penetrated the core of Oman. A new understanding was needed to ensure cooperation between the two populations, particularly once the system of indirect rule through the client Lakhmid state broke down.

#### The Late Sasanid period

Ṭabari's general account<sup>74</sup> of Anûshiravân's reign shows the new, more dynamic policy. Having finally dealt with the Mazdak problem and re-established the old property rights, he restructured his administration, re-equipped the military, built roads, bridges, and forts, constructed *qanât* and other irrigation works, and made financial advances to his local governors to organize their provinces and generally better conditions. That is precisely what happened in Oman, which without doubt was brought under direct control, probably under the supreme command of the Ispabâdh of Nimrûz.<sup>75</sup> While Sohar remained the main coastal base, Rustâq was developed as a major fortified centre for control of the east-coast hinterland.

Sasanid administrative structures are notoriously hard to fathom,<sup>76</sup> but it seems that in the early period the term *rustak* was largely synonymous with *dêh*, the village proper, in contrast with the *arvaris*, the cultivable land around. But by Anûshiravân's time, and partly because of his reorganization and growing urbanization in the central provinces, the *rostâg* represented a grouping of villages, the sub-unit of the province, the *shahr*. However, in the peripheries of empire it seems to have designated the centre for a frontier district, a major division of the *ostân* (royal lands). Not only has the term been preserved in Oman under **(p.59)** its Arabized form as *Rustâq*, but the remarkable Qal'at al-Kisra watered by the Falaj al-Şâ'ighi still dominates the rich cultivated area of this remarkable site. The fact that it was also known in local tradition as Burj Kisra ibn Shirwân<sup>77</sup> clearly indicates that it dates to Kisra I. And it was almost certainly from this period that much of the *falaj* system of the Ghadaf was developed, employing new techniques of cementing and the inverted siphon (*gharrâq fallâh*), probably learnt from the Romans when the emperor Valerian's army was enslaved and put to work to develop Khûzistân.<sup>78</sup> Similarly, settlement in the lower Wadi Sumâyil was probably expanded and a fortified coastal centre developed at Damâ.

#### The Persian-Arab treaty

Further information on the relations between the Persians and the Arabs which support this hypothesis of Late Sasanid development is given by 'Awtabi,<sup>79</sup> who recounts that an agreement was reached which prevailed until Islamic times, whereby the Persians should have 4,000 *marâziba* and *asâwira* and an *'âmil* (agent, probably also responsible for tax-collecting) with the kings of the Azd. By Anûshiravân's time the role of the *marzban* had declined from that of the lord of the frontier province (cf. the feudal authority of a *Markgraf*), as had apparently been the case when 'Mâlik b. Fahm' arrived in Oman, to something more in the nature of a local chief in the frontier regions of the Persian state.<sup>80</sup> On the other hand, the *asâwira*, who originally formed a noble cavalry elite, had clearly grown into something more important: which is why the Arabs were prepared to grant them the highest pension rate and other very favourable terms in return for their support in the conquest of Iraq.<sup>81</sup> And amongst their specialization was riding elephants in battle. The fact that the Persians used elephants in the war with Mâlik b. Fahm indicates that elements from the later Sasanid period has segued into his story.

According to Zakeri,<sup>82</sup> the armaments and tactics of the cavalry (the sole military force to count) were profoundly modified under Anûshiravân, and with it the military social structure. Now the regular cavalry were largely drawn from the non-noble *dihqanân* (*dahâqîn*), who received land **(p.60)** allotments from the treasury for maintenance and equipment, and also for the foot soldiers raised from their peasantry. On the borders of empire, however, the land was granted as hereditary property on condition that possessors should defend their frontiers and hand down the obligation to their descent. Although the origins of these measures go back earlier, its use can definitely be attributed to Anûshiravân's time, when frontier lands taken from the enemy were granted to the soldiers and their chiefs, upon the condition that they should maintain military service and not transfer the land to civilians. But while the *dihqanân* formed the base of the military order, and individuals could rise to the highest ranks, the *asâwira* (*asbarân*) retained something of their 'knightly' origins, as elite, highly trained cavalry who had to prove their

worth. And the *asâwira* had a particular role in the defence of the empire's frontiers and received commensurate reward for their services.<sup>83</sup>

All this accords with the situation in Oman. The *marâziba* and *asâwira* represented the two senior grades, one perhaps more civil and administrative, the other basically military (although such a distinction must be treated with reserve), in some form of quasi-feudal organization, and their large numbers indicate both an extensive area of control and an active economic development of the land. At a lower level were the *dihqanân* (*dehqân*, cf. *deh* village), formed a sort of landlord class, perhaps synonymous with an ancient term *hanâqira* in Oman, living in their villages, taxing and enrolling their peasants (*bayâdîr*), and maintaining and developing the land and its irrigation system. An early *falaj* ruling, which is clearly a carry-over of the pre-Islamic practice, lays down that the minimum standard share given by the *hanqari* to a worker looking after his property (i.e. the *bîdâr*) is one-sixth.<sup>84</sup> But it is also clear that there was some form of geographical division of the country into an area of direct Persian rule, and an indirect under the Azdi ruler. The respective areas of responsibility is further indicated by the fact that 'Awtabi goes on to explain that the Persians were in the coastal regions *fî'l-sawâhil wa shuṭûṭ al-baḥr*) while 'the Azd were kings in the mountains, deserts and other parts of the outskirts of Oman (*aṭrâf 'Umân*)'. All affairs there were entrusted to them. He also adds that the Kisra used Oman to imprison potential troublemakers. While this 'treaty' receives no mention in the classical sources, their remarks do throw some light on the nature of this division. So Balâdhuri (*Futûḥ* 76) reports that at the time of the conversion to Islam in Oman the majority of the Arabs were Azd, but there were many other Arabs in the desert fringes. Ṭabari (i. 1686) more or **(p. 61)** less confirms that; the *majûs*, that is, the Persianized population were in the villages (*buldân*) and the Arabs were around them. In Bal'ami's version (iii. 307-9) he states that all the Arabs of Oman and Mahraland were bedouin at the time they converted to Islam.

These statements more or less accord with and confirm what has already been described. The majority of Arab tribes had not sedentarized, but there were two distinct geographical groupings: the Shanu'a and Kinda, living probably rather as the *shawâwi* do today in the mountain zone, with at least part of the Yaḥmad and the Ma'âwil located right in the middle of the area of what became direct Persian control based on Rustâq; and most of the rest of the tribes nomadizing in the desert foreland on the west of the mountain and on the plain of the Batina coastal strip. On the other hand, to say they were all bedouin is clearly an oversimplification. The Prophet's letter addressed to the Thumâla and Ḥuddân Azd for the bedouin of the coasts and those inhabiting the valleys (*li bâdiyat al-asyâf wa nâzilat al-ajwâf*) of the Sohar hinterland, itself makes clear that part of the Arab population, at least, was cultivating.<sup>85</sup> But as the reference to the existing Persian taxation system of assessing the crop on the tree (*khirâṣ*) and its reform under Islamic jurisdiction also shows, those engaged in agriculture were living as simple cultivators, not generally as landlords. They formed part of the *ahl al-arḍ bilâd*, the subject peasantry, *bayâdîr*, or at the most in control of minor settlements in the upper valleys. True, the economic interdependence of the Arabs and the villagers would also have led to some association between tribal groups and particular villages, but such economic relations do not argue for an integration of the two societies. Arab tribal society was endogamous, and marriage outside the clan with non-*sharîf* groups would have been unthinkable. The break-down of those barriers only came about with the full establishment of

the Imamate when the tribesmen became villagers and the villagers tribesmen, as shown in Chapter 10, but that took time.

So at one level the treaty was perhaps less to do with a geographical division than with a socio-economic separation, with the Arabs ruling the 'desert' and the Persians the 'sown' (*badw wa ḥaḍar*). Rather than rule indirectly through Hira, Anûshiravân gave the local Arabs autonomy, recognizing the leader of the Ma'wali clan who lived in close proximity to their main fortified centre at Rustâq as 'Julandâ', and appointing an agent with him. That appointment reinforced the traditional power of the Arab leader as paramount shaikh (*dhû 'l-imâma*, the 'turban') with imperial (p.62) power, *dhû l-tâj*, and in turn helped weld the Azd and other tribes of Oman into something of a political entity. Similar arrangements seem to have been made elsewhere: the Arab leader in Bahrayn was recognized as *Isbâdh* (a corruption of the Persian title *Ispabâdh*<sup>86</sup>), while the ruling family in south-west Arabia were known as the *Abnâ'*. South-east Oman, on the other hand, may have come under the Salîma Julandâs (Julandâ b. Karkar) whose authority was recognized over the coast and hill regions of Kirmân. Even so, there was a measure of territorial separation between the Arab and Persian authorities, which may explain the various ways the name Oman is used in the early Arab geographies.<sup>87</sup> Certainly there seemed to be a degree of Arab independence in the piedmont zone of northern Oman where the tribes migrating via Bahrayn first congregated, but while Sohar, the natural port for this region, was firmly Persian, the Arabs had their own outlet at the little bay of Dabâ (Dibâ), where the Julandâ had the right to the tithe. Along with Sohar and possibly Damâ at the other end of the Batina, it was part of the pre-Islamic peripatetic Arab markets (*sûq al-'arab*) for the region.<sup>88</sup> Probably a similar autonomy existed in south-east Oman, where Qalhât might have been the local port. The main settled core of Oman, however, came under direct Persian control exercised from fortified centres, and included the whole of the Jawf and the Sirr, and Sohar's mountainous hinterland, as the letter of the Prophet to the Ḥuddân and Thumâla makes clear. This Persian-controlled province was that specifically referred to as Mazûn, as an early unknown source quoted in the *Ṣaḥîfa al-Qaḥṭâniyya*<sup>89</sup> indicates when stating that Jâbir b. Zayd was born at Firq in 'Umân al-Mazûniyya. Whether these (p.63) taxes collected by the Julandâ from the Arab areas were paid in whole or part to the Persians is not clear, but that they were in Mazûn proper is apparent from the letter of the Prophet quoted above.

## The Status of the Omani Arabs

### Attitudes to the nomads

All the above discussion clearly indicates that the Arabs were a subject population, even though the predominantly nomadic tribes in the interior were largely left to their own devices, controlled through the Ma'wali Julandâ (*nisba* Julandâni). It is possible that the first of this paramount *sayyid* family to be recognized was al-Mustakbir (b. Mas'ûd b. al-Ḥarâr/ Jarâr b. 'Abd 'Izz), as his name perhaps indicates, and led to the family adopting the title as a name. At the time of the call to Islam his son was simply called al-Julandâ b. Mustakbir, and it was his great-grandson, al-Julandâ b. Mas'ûd, who became the first Omani Imam.<sup>90</sup>

The Arab tribes, of course, considered themselves *sharîf*, but there is tendency in Europe, at least, to regard the camel-herding bedouin (*a'râb*) as the noblest form of pure Arabness. It is an attitude encouraged by the Arabs themselves, with their cult of *jâhili* poetry, the grammarians

and lexicographers' linguistic research amongst the nomads, the Umayyads' desert palaces, the cult of genealogy which reached a peak just when al-Ma'mûn was preaching class: 'Rank is the genealogical affinity affecting people; thus a noble Arab is closer to a noble Persian than he is to a low-class Arab ...'<sup>91</sup> It is simply not true, either now or then. The Qur'ân is generally scathing about the bedouin, although the Prophet, and after him Abû Bakr and 'Umar, did call them to *jihâd*. Interestingly enough, one of our earliest Ibâdî sources, Sâlim b. Dhakwân, supports their rights, accusing (§47) 'Uthmân of excluding them because he did not want them to have a share in the stipends (*a'tiyya*). Crone and Zimmermann think this accusation is unique to the Ibâdî literature (Barrâdi repeats the accusation), and point out that Sâlim's justification is lifted out of context from a passage in the Qur'ân (XLVIII, 11-16) which is generally critical of the bedouin, who lacked motivation and were only incited by the prospect of spoils. However, the fact that the bedouin may have been excluded from the *'ata* at some stage seems to be confirmed by 'Umar II's 'Fiscal Rescript'.<sup>92</sup> Sâlim also indicates (§71) that the Azâriqa completely excluded even those bedouin who sympathized with them. Once again, **(p.64)** our commentators think that remark is unique, and attribute it to the fact that they had not made the *hijra* with them. Nevertheless, the anti-bedouin prejudice is voiced by the outspoken Basran Khâriji,<sup>93</sup> Abû 'Ubayda Ma'mar b. al-Muthannâ (c. 110-209/728-824/5, an important source for early Basran affairs used by Ṭabari and others), who declared that he detested the Arabs of the desert.<sup>94</sup> That same attitude finds echoes in 'God has never sent a prophet nor established a caliphate or kingship except among the *ḥaḍâra'*, attributed to the Ḥimyar of Ḥimṣ.<sup>95</sup>

Another dimension to the *hijra* issue, and one which periodically re-emerges in Islam right through to the Wahhâbi policy in the twentieth century of settling the bedouin in *hijar*, is the question of whether one could be a true Muslim without emigrating to a *miṣr*. 'Umar II seems to have considered it necessary, according to the Rescript (para. III). Sâlim and the Ibâdîs rebutted the argument by maintaining that the duty of *hijra* came to an end with the conquest of Mecca. Further prejudice against the bedouin arose because they tended to cling to pre-Islamic customs and war-cries, exhibiting preference for the *bay'a 'arabiyya* rather than the *bay'a hijra* offered them in the original migration to Madina;<sup>96</sup> it is also manifest in the *Yâ Âl Mâlik [b. Fahm]* tribal appeal in the apostasy war in Oman (see Chapter 3). Finally, it is worth pointing out here that while the Omani contingents in the first Islamic campaigns came primarily from tribes that were semi-nomadic, it was the sudden influx of the fully nomadic fringe population around 59/679 to Basra, attracted by the huge new wealth coming from these campaigns, which upset the political leadership there and led to the Ma'ni shaikh's attempted putsch in 64.

The essential point to note from our point of view, however, is that being bedouin in early Islamic times was no recommendation, and the emphasis in the classical sources that the Azd and other tribes<sup>97</sup> in Oman were nomads is implicitly, if not explicitly, one of the many sneers at the Omanis. That is why Sâlim as an Ibâdî defends their rights and fights prejudices against them.

#### Ḥijâzi attitudes

Even more a subject for the scorn of their enemies was the fact that many Omanis had become detribalized through their maritime occupations. **(p.65)** 'Every time an Azdi mum has a baby boy, it is news of a valiant sailor', as Mas'ûdi,<sup>98</sup> in his parody on tribal reputations, puts it.

Furthermore, the fact that they had settled along the Persian coast as well as the Arab and were living in poor conditions in and around the main ports like Obollah meant that they were losing their Arabness, becoming assimilated into the *'ulûj*, the common (non-Arab) people. All that is thrown at them by their enemies in early Islamic times. They were 'animals that do not seek to better themselves', and Sohar, along with Sîrâf and Obollah, formed the three sinks (*hushûsh*, in contrast with *janân*) of the world.<sup>99</sup> To call an Omani a Mazûni was the greatest insult, as it referred to their pre-Islamic subject status. Even Hajjaj would have hesitated to call al-Muhallab a Mazûni, but he openly referred to his son, Yazîd, as 'that Mazûni'. And their tribal enemies similarly: 'As for the Azd, the Azd of Abû Sa'îd [al-Muhallab] they hate to be called the Mazûn', trumpeted Kumayt, while Jarîr hailed the defeat of Yazîd b. al-Muhallab in a much-recited couplet which started: 'The fires of Mazûn and its people have been extinguished'; to which Abû 'Ubayda, who never lost any chance to hurl invective at the Muhallabids, added that the Mazûn were sailors.<sup>100</sup> Muhallab's father, Abû Şufra, his Tamîmi enemies said, was originally a weaver called Beshkharé (weavers were notoriously stupid) from Kharg island, who enlisted in Ibn Abi'l-Âşî's service as a sayce (stable groom).<sup>101</sup>

### Conclusion

The above reconstruction concerning the situation in Oman on the eve of the advent of Islam shows two preconditions that allowed the Ibâdî Imamate eventually to establish itself there. The first was the resentment of the Azd and Yaman tribes at the attitudes, as well as the politics, of the Hîjâzi governing elite, a feeling in some measure shared by all the Arabs of the Gulf and southern Arabia. The second was that the majority of those living in the Sasanid territories, whether Arab or not, were subject peoples of generally humble occupation and condition. It is no coincidence that proto-Ibâdism developed in a milieu which included such figures as Ja'far b. al-Sammâk, son of a fisherman (variant Sammân, butter merchant); Abû Nûh Şâlih b. Nûh al-Dahhân, the painter/greaser; and Abû 'Ubayda Muslim b. Abû Karîma, a basket-weaver (*qaffâf*), a *mawlâ* of Tamîm.

**(p.66)** There was a long, long way to go before the Azd resentment and the humble people began to make common cause, but eventually they did and the crucible was Basra. But before we start examining this 'hatching' period of the Ibâdî chick, it is necessary first to examine the egg-laying process and see why and how Oman became part of the original Muslim state.

### Notes:

- (1) For details see *EI2* Mahra (Müller).
- (2) See in particular Johnstone 1974, and al-Tabûki 1982.
- (3) Rentz notes that the region called al-Ahqâf (q.v. jn **EI2**) was, and still is, used by some to include the Hadramawt and was associated with 'Âd.
- (4) Beirut edn., 266.
- (5) al-Tabûki 1982; 51-6.
- (6) The association of both parts of the name with deities is perhaps significant.

(7) Notably Hamdâni, *Şifa*, 51-2, Bakri, 417.

(8) Note the identification of these early inhabitants with the Shiḥr region itself.

(9) Cf. Wilkinson 1974; also McDow 2005.

(10) For details of the sevenths see Donner 1981: 235.

(11) Ross's translation (p. 116) of the *Kashf* should be ignored here. Furthermore, the *Kashf* has amalgamated two tribal lists which 'Awtabi treats quite separately, the dispersal of the Azd from Mârib, and what is probably his own list of minor elements from important tribes also found in Oman.

(12) However, as Potts (1990: i. ch.10) points out, although *falaj* origins go back well before the Achaemenid period that does not preclude their introduction being part of the same process of contact with the Iranian side of the Gulf that accounts for the marked similarity between certain Iranian and Omani pottery and metal types. One of the problems in dealing objectively with this issue of *falaj* origins is also that of modern nationalism!

(13) 1985 and personal communication.

(14) 2005 and in *Tepe Yahya*.

(15) *Nahḍa*, 181 and Wilkinson 1983b: 189.

(16) Potts 1985. That interior Oman should have accorded some sort of suzerainty to Assyria is not surprising when we see Saba (which first features in Assyrian texts from the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC) paid tribute (Robin 1989: 261). Potts 2003, however, sees this more as gifts, good-will aimed at ensuring continued Sabaeen caravan trade with the north.

(17) Tikriti 2002.

(18) Once more, I am grateful to the Uerpmanns for this information concerning camel domestication: reference may also be made to Potts 2004. However, I am not attempting to update further the evidence discussed in Wilkinson 1987: 33-7 beyond this and Potts 1990: vol. i. I am certainly not going to try to evaluate the ongoing acrimonious debates amongst the archaeologists concerning the late Iron Age, which seem to be generating more heat than light.

(19) Wilkinson 1964.

(20) For the site, see numerous publications by R. Boucharlat and M. Mouton. For the tombstones see Wilkinson 1977: 135, n. 6, Robin 1994, and for numismatic evidence Sedov 1995.

(21) Magee 1999 and the associated text described by Müller.

(22) For a recent discussion see Potts 2003, who raises the possibility of an even earlier text from Syria apparently dating to the previous century.

(23) See P. Gignoux's 1971 study of the Shâpûr and Kartir lists quoted in Potts 1990: ii. 330.



(24) Like the Dhâhira (al-Zâhira) in the north, the Sharqiyya is a relatively modern toponym. Its orientation to wards the ports of the south-east coast was stimulated by the commercial rise of Qalhât in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century (Ch. 13) and subsequently by the expansion of East African trade under the Ya'âruba and the integration of the Arab-Swahili coastal settlements into Sa'îd b. Şultân's Zanzibar empire during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

(25) Cf. Wilkinson 1977: ch. 9.

(26) *Ishtiqâq*, 501.

(27) 'Awtabi gives his full genealogy ending with b. Ḥaḍrami b. Riyâm. This may indicate he was from the Ḥaḍârim, whose genealogy is not surprisingly disputed.

(28) *Şifa*, 51-2.

(29) Cf. also Bakri, 417.

(30) d. 1222 AD. This passage is quoted in *Tuḥfa*, i. 8-9, but I have been unable to trace it in al-Sharîshi's commentary on al-Ḥarîri's *Maqâmât*.

(31) Not only is Mayd'an's attachment at a very high genealogical level, but there is no intermingling of the sub-groups with other Azd, while Râsib himself remains quite isolated among the five 'brothers'. Furthermore, 'Awtabi (AB 173rff.) is quite specific that all the Mayd'an are in the Hijaz: yet the Râsib are mentioned, both in Omani and classical sources, as being in Oman. The suspect incorporation of the 'Imam' 'Abdullâh b. Wahb into the Râsib will be discussed later.

(32) 'Awtabi A261 ff.; *Tuḥfa*, i. 41 ff.

(33) Cf. Işṭakhri, 116-17, 140-2; 'Awtabi, A270v; Yâqût, arts. al-Dîkdân and Huzw.

(34) The stories concerning the Ṭayy dispersal are given in Yâqût art. Ajâ. The Ibn al-Kalbi version indicates a migration from al-Shiḥr while 'Awtabi (A Π8v ff./AB 83v ff.) gives some details of the Omani groups, mentioning two villages with which they were associated, Hudâ and Şiyâ. Some elements spread into neighbouring areas in the Sumâyil Gap and the tail-end of the Batina at Damâ.

(35) While 'Awtabi (A66r ff., AB46v ff. is rather defective) provides some precious details, his basic account derives from Ibn Qutayba (cf. *Ma'ârif*, ed. Okacha 1960: 93-4). See also the article on the tribe in *EI2* by Caskel (with corrections under Bakr b. Wâ'il) and also Hamdâni, *Şifa*, 136. For Omani details see Wilkinson 1993.

(36) In 'Awtabi's time (A68r) only the Mâzin b. Shaybân b. Dhuhl (b. Tha'laba, brother of Shaybân) appear to have been there; cf. also Ibn Durayd, *Ishtiqâq*, 351. Later, after the 'Âmir Rabî'a tribes started arriving (Ch. 13), numerous Wâ'il clans also began to settle, probably under the aegis of the Jubûr.

(37) Ṭabari, ii. 450. Significantly it was to the Mâlik b. Fahm leader the renewal appeal was made.

(38) 'Awtabi says Ḥaj(a)r, the capital of al-Yamâma, took its name from Ḥajr b. 'Imrân.

(39) See 'Awtabi (A224v-25r/AB 158v-59r) and Bakri 32, 58, for this story.

(40) Mubarrad *Kâmil* has them as Mâlik b. Fahm, but the attribution to Ḥajar is confirmed in *Ishtiqaq* (p. 484) and Ibn al-Kalbi (Caskel Table 206).

(41) Hence also the apparent anomaly that in the civil war at the end of the Ya'rubî Imamate the main B. Ghâfir were Hinâwi rather than Ghâfiri!

(42) See Ṭabari, ii. 448-9 for the fact that they were settled in pre-Islamic times.

(43) Confirmation of the Omani sources that the Yaḥmad and Ḥuddân came to Oman is found in Hamdâni, *Ṣifa*, 206 ff.

(44) Possibly because they originated from an upland region.

(45) Ibn Khallikân art. Abû Ṣufra; Ibn Qutayba (Cairo edn., not in Wüstenfeld), 180.

(46) See particularly Ṭabari trans. v, note 362 and *EI2* Kinda.

(47) Cf. Kennet 2007, with reservations!

(48) *Ṣifa*, 88.

(49) From Bakri's statement, 'as for 'Umân which is the sea port ... it is the famous town of al-'Arûḍ' (cf. Ibn Faḳîh, 'al-Yamâma and al-Baḥrayn as far as 'Umân are part of al-'Arûḍ'), it seems there was a concept of al-'Arûḍ a s covering the area from Najd to the coast, including al-Yamâma, al-Baḥrayn, and northern Oman and that 'Umân itself was identifiable with the Sohar region.

(50) Ibn Qutayba 1960 edn.,108; 'Awtabi, AB212vff.; Ibn Durayd, *Ishtiqaq*, 508; *Tuḥfa*, i. 51-2.

(51) For references see Potts 1990: ii. 252-5.

(52) I suspect that some of the success attributed to Mâlik b. Fahm in evicting the Persians is in fact that of the Shanu'a Azd.

(53) See Wilkinson 1977: ch. 8: the Ḥawâsina today are essentially made up of Ḥuddân and Ma'âwil, supposedly descent from Sa'id b. Abbâd al-Julandâni.

(54) The name is also known to Hamdâni, *Ṣifa*, *loc cit.*

(55) 'Awtabi, A173v-180r/AB118v-122v; A is far better than AB here.

(56) The Wadi Shawka area lies south of Manâma. The Wadi Madha is the northern branch of the Wadi Hâm complex, debouching between Khawr Fakkân and al-Fujayra. The Wadi Ḥattâ leads from north of al-Sumayni to Shinâş.

(57) The Darâmika are of Sakûni origins.

(58) Naturally, the genealogies given by 'Awtabi do not altogether match those of Ibn al-Kalbi (Caskel and Strenziok 1966: tables 233 ff.), since the latter only sketches the descent from the main figures while 'Awtabi is concerned with a later period of history.

(59) See also Caskel and Strenziok 1966: table 237.

(60) The Wadi B. 'Awf/Saḥtan system provided the line of penetration into the Ghadaf, as was manifest again after the 'Abriyîn developed as a tribe based on al-Ḥamrâ, and disputed *inter alia* al-'Awâbi with the B. Kharûş (details in Wilkinson 1987: 111-15).

(61) Siyâbi 1965: 137.

(62) For their distribution at the time of the conversion to Islam, see *inter alia* Lecker 1995b: 638.

(63) Balâdhuri, *Ansâb*, v. 259; Ṭabari, i. 2495, ii. 122.

(64) Notably Ibn Ruzayq.

(65) The fact that later the finest breeds for the Delhi Sultanate came from eastern and southern Arabia indicates the capacity of this region to breed horses. For details see Wilkinson 1987: 63-4.

(66) Cf. Ṭabari, i. 2738; Hamdâni, *Şifa*, 204; Abû Yûsuf, *K. al-Kharâj*; Bal'ami, iii. 401.

(67) Quoted Daryaei 2003a.

(68) Piacentini 2002.

(69) Cf. evidence for the eastern side of the Qatar peninsula in King 1998.

(70) Cf. *inter alia* Whitehouse and Williamson 1973; and for recent archaeology Carter *et al.* 2006.

(71) For a recent discussion of literary and archaeological evidence see Kervran 2004.

(72) Zakeri 1995: 120-2.

(73) Cf. Potts 2008. In this too he makes clear that Wahrîz was a title.

(74) *Ta'rikh*, i. 897-8.

(75) Cf. Potts 2008. However, this quadri-partition of the Sasanid empire was based on Zoroastrian mythological understanding of the world, and did not apply to the real administrative divisions, except perhaps with respect to the supreme military command; cf. Daryaei 2003b.

(76) I have tried to synthesize Pigulevskaja 1963: 128 ff. with Daryaei 2003b and Zakeri 1995; also of importance for the *marâziba* in the frontier districts is Khawârazmi, *Mafâtîh*, 114.

(77) Cf. Miles 1910: 423-4. The extraordinary central keep of the original Persian fort is shown in Wilkinson 2008: photos 63 and 64. Unfortunately no archaeological work has been done in the Rustâq region, and so I still hold to views expressed earlier, that the *falaj* system developed here was essentially of the late Sasanid period.

(78) This technique (cf. Adams 1962) is scarcely, if at all, known on the main *falajs* on the western side of the mountains and the apparent exception of the Qasawât *falaj* at Izki dates to a Ya'rubî reconstruction (cf. Wilkinson 1977: ch. 6, n. 8 and 1987, *pace* Kennet 2007).

(79) A271r/AB201r.

(80) Ṭabari, i. 898; Khwârazmi, *Mafâtîh*, 114-15; Siddiqi 1919: 78-83.

(81) Balâdhuri, *Futûh*, 373-4.

(82) *op. cit.* 52 ff.

(83) Balâdhuri, *Futûh*, 373-4. Ṭabari, i. 897-8 specifies that Anûshiravân ensured that the *asâwira* were properly equipped and financially supported.

(84) For further details see Wilkinson 1974 and 1977: 259.

(85) Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqât*, I. ii. 35. The Thumâla's real name was 'Awf b. Aslam b. Aḥjan, of the Mâlik b. Naṣr b. al-Azd, the same grouping the Ḥuddân belonged to; hence their association in the Jabal Ḥuddân behind Sohar.

(86) Siddiqi 1919: 78-9.

(87) Cf. (1) Bakri (207, 668-9 probably based on Ibn Qutayba) who says that Tu'âm is the capital of 'Umân, which is that part of 'Umân that follows the sea [i.e. Gulf Coast] and that which follows the land Ṣuḥâr [Gulf of Oman side]; (2) Ibn Khurdadhbih's route description 'Qatar, al-Sabkha [Dubai-Sharja area?], thence to 'Umân, that is Ṣuḥâr and Dabâ'; (3) 'The capital of 'Umân is Ṣuḥâr' (Yâqût art. 'Umân).

(88) I have followed essentially Ya'qûbi, i. 313-14 and Yâqût arts. Dabâ and Damâ, even though Ibn Ḥabîb (*Muḥabbar*, 263 ff.) seems fuller. The Ṣuḥâr *sûq* lasted five days, at the start of Rajab, while that of Dabâ only lasted one day, at the end of the same month, although Ibn Ḥabîb states it was attended by merchants from Sind, Hind, and China who traded by bargaining; he also says the Julandâ collected the tithe at Ṣuḥâr as well as Dabâ (even if he did, that did not

necessarily mean he kept it). My own view is that there were two *sûqs*, the main one in Sohar, the other in the autonomous area at Dabâ/Dibâ where the Julandâ collected the tithe. Damâ could result from confusion with Dabâ but more likely it was a subsidiary part of the Sohar *sûq* serving the Lower Batina. It is perhaps worth noting that Dabâ on the east coast may earlier have formed part of a triangle with al-Dur on the Gulf coast and Mleiha inland, cf. Sabah 2006, also Barker and Hassan 2005. But since these two sites were abandoned by the 4<sup>th</sup> century it would make sense of why Dabâ became the port for the Arabs who started concentrating in the region as they migrated from Bahrayn and indeed may be evidence for the dating of the second wave of Azd migration.

(89) f. 177v.

(90) Wilkinson 1975.

(91) Quoted Kister 1976: 50.

(92) Guessous 1996: para. III, 119. The author of the article is somewhat puzzled by the passage.

(93) Madelung 1992 has tried to argue that he was not a Khâriji, but Lecker 1995*a*, notably pp. 94-7, has shown convincingly he was (albeit disguising the fact), with either Şufri or even Ibâdi tendencies.

(94) See his biography in Ibn Khallikân, iii. 388-98.

(95) Madelung 1986*b*.

(96) For discussion of Goldziher's views see Hinds 1971*a*.

(97) The account of the B. Nâjiyya (Sâma) uprising (Ch 5) makes clear that Khirri's tribal following was essentially bedouin.

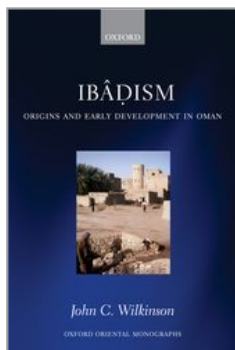
(98) *Murûj*, vi. 143.

(99) Ibn Qiriyya to Hajjaj and al-Aşmâ'i in Ibn Faqîh, 92, 104.

(100) Al-Mubarrad, *Kâmil*, 567-8, 642; Yâqût arts. al-Mazûn; Ṭabari, ii. 489; al-Zabîdi and Ibn Manzûr arts. Zutt; 'Awtabi, AB166v.

(101) Yâqût art. Kharak.

University Press Scholarship Online  
**Oxford Scholarship Online**



## Ibâdism: Origins and Early Development in Oman

John C. Wilkinson

Print publication date: 2010

Print ISBN-13: 9780199588268

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2011

DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.001.0001

## The Conversion to Islam

John C. Wilkinson

DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.003.0003

### [-] Abstract and Keywords

This chapter discusses pre-Islamic religion and the conversion of the Arab tribes in Oman, how they drove the Persian occupants out and took possession of the settled lands. It then examines the conflicting histories of the *ridda* (apostasy) wars in some detail, not only because anything new relevant to the period of the Prophet and the immediate aftermath of his death is of concern to Muslim history, but also because the tribal and religious bias of the classical Arabic sources against the Yamani tribes and the much feared Ibâdi '*shurât*' has downplayed the role of Oman. The chapter concludes with an examination of the system of Caliphate government as it became incorporated into the Islamic state and the tribes became involved in campaigns in Sasanid territory, first based on Tawwaj and then on Basra (Ch IV), with the consequence that Oman itself lapsed into a tribal backwater under the pre-Islamic dynasty of the Julandâ.

*Keywords:* pre-Islamic religion, Oman, Caliphate government, Tawwaj, Basra, ridda wars, Julandâ, Ibâdi

### Hatched in Madina

In the adage concerning how the true religion was established in Oman, the original version reputedly stems from the Prophet, who said that the egg was laid at Mecca, hatched in Madina, and manifested itself (*nahḍa*) in Oman.<sup>1</sup> Only later was this reworded so that the egg was laid at Madina, hatched in Basra, and flew to Oman. For this chapter we will stick with the earlier version, since the original call to Islam came direct from the Prophet in Madina and the Arabs of Oman answered it. So, leaving aside the religious aspects of the Prophet's mission, analysis of why the summons was issued and obeyed must take into account the material interests for both parties.

One aspect of the specific advantages accruing to the nascent Muslim community from converting the Omani Arabs needs dealing with straight away, the idea that Quraysh were *tujjâr al-'arab* and Mecca a sanctuary at the hub of some great international trading network. Crone<sup>2</sup> has questioned this familiar thesis and raised considerable controversy, but in so far as Oman is concerned, it is sufficient to note that it lay on the periphery of any Arabian trading system. Remoteness characterizes all traditions concerning Oman in the Prophet's time and overland commerce was nil. The only traces are in the famous *aswâq al-'arab*, often referred to, but whose precise functioning has yet to be elucidated. What emerges from Ya'qûbi and Ibn Ḥabîb's accounts is that they feature in the period shortly before Islam, and that from Dabâ/Dibâ to 'Adan (Aden) all were coastal, except for one in Hadramawt under Kinda protection, which was only visited when access was considered safe. The Arab merchants came by sea for the products of the Indian Ocean trade and also to barter with the inhabitants of their hinterlands. Conceivably, the Prophet might have seen potential benefits in integrating Meccan trade with that in the Sasanid domain, but if so it was very much a secondary consideration, and in so far as commerce had anything to do with the expansion of Islam **(p.68)** to the borders of the *Arđ al-Hind* it would be that of denying the Persians the wealth of the monsoon trade. On the other hand, taking possession of Oman's lucrative maritime commerce might well have acted as an incentive for the local Julandâ to throw off Persian rule.

Much more interesting from an Omani point of view in Crone's thesis is that Muḥammad was neither a social reformer nor a resolver of spiritual doubts, but the creator of a people, a view that gels well with that of Rodinson.<sup>3</sup> One does not have to be a Marxist to accept his idea that because of the associations of Christianity and Judaism with external imperial powers or with non-Arab peoples, the Arabs were ripe to accept a new form of monotheism that provided the ideology to assert their identity and create their own empire. Muḥammad might claim to be setting up a universal order and therefore had to invite the rulers of the great empires to join him, but that was pure window-dressing, and neither he nor anyone else expected the monarchs of the Byzantine and Sasanid empires to send him tribute. His message was for the Arabs. But before embarking on conquest he had to bring in the great mass of Yaman tribes, first and foremost in that demographic reservoir of Greater Yemen itself, but also Oman. The Yemen tribes early joined the conquests, making up by far the largest proportion of the army that moved to open up the Syrian and then the Iraqi front, but Oman's case was somewhat different. Whereas Yemen was a prolongation of the Hijaz and the Persian *abnâ'* nominally vassals of the Sasanids, Oman was isolated and fully integrated into the Persian domain, albeit peripheral areas were left under the quasi-autonomous Arab rule of Julandâ families. The insularity of Oman within the Peninsula cannot be emphasized too much: all external contacts were by sea. While it is true that Arab migrations might slowly penetrate the region by the hinterlands of the South Arabian or Gulf coasts, and there was the odd arduous passage across the extreme arid wastes bordering the great sand sea of the 'Empty Quarter', there were no regular trade routes. Whilst (Greater) Bahrayn was accessible to western Arabia via Yamâma, Oman was not and there was no question of the Prophet sending the Omani Azd an auxiliary force. That fact should also be borne in mind when we come to consider the *ridda* wars and Sayf b. 'Umar's account of Abû Bakr's generals chasing back and forth, around and through Arabia, to deal with the inhabitants of Dabâ.

On the other hand, the Arabs of Oman were necessary for the Prophet's community, not just because they were Arabs, but because Oman was potentially the 'soft underbelly' of the Sasanid empire. If the Arabs evicted the Persian government, established in the heyday of **(p.69)** Anûshiravân's reign but now crumbling, then not only could the Arabs command and cut off trade, but they could in due course be harnessed, along with their relatives living in Kirmân and the Persian Coast of the Lower Gulf, to fight in Fârs. That was also true in some measure of Bahrayn, but it was peripheral to the main maritime commercial axes.

With these ideas in mind, the story of the Omani Arabs' conversion to Islam and its immediate aftermath may be examined. It will be dealt with in some detail, not just because it is significant for the origins of Islam in Oman itself, but also because anything that throws light on the historical constructs of the period is grist to the mill for understanding and perhaps reassessing the earliest phases of Islamic history. After all, if the ideal Muslim community was that established during the lifetime of the Prophet, then it follows that this is the only period that really matters in Muslim historiography, and neglected Oman may at last perhaps find its rightful place in mainline history. That it certainly does not if the classical accounts are followed, and the prejudices are clear from the start, both in the failure to give credit to the role of the Azd in driving out the Persians, and then by exaggerating the *rida* there.

#### Mâzin b. Ghaḍûba

The local story starts with that recounted by 'Awtabi, of how Mâzin b. Ghaḍûba of the Nabhân Ṭayy was the first to be converted by Bâjir, the very idol he was worshipping at Sumâ'il/Sumâyil (hence its name, Ism Allâh); or the not-dissimilar one, albeit with less detail, concerning an Azdi of 'Amr or Mâlik b. Fahm descent.<sup>4</sup> Miracles do not characterize Islam, and it may be taken as folk-tale. As Lecker<sup>5</sup> has shown, the object of such miraculous conversions by the recipient and his consequent visit to the Prophet was to confer Companion status on the enlightened man, and certainly part of Mâzin's family, which ended up in Mosul, managed to ensure that their forebear got his name recorded in works immortalizing the first transmitters. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that there was idol worship, and Ibn Durayd states that Bâjir/Bâjar was that of the Azd and their neighbours, the Quḍâ'a and Ṭayy.<sup>6</sup> Another idol that features in Omani folklore is Jurnân, supposedly the eponym of pre-Islamic Izki.

**(p.70)** Idol worship however, tends to play along with the rather simplistic view that the Arabs were pagan and the Persianized population *majûs* (Zoroastrian). There were certainly also *majûs* amongst the Arab tribes and the leading Arab figure in Bahrayn, al-Mundhir b. Sâwâ, was one. More important is the influence of the two pre-existing monotheistic religions in the region. We know that in South Arabia, at least, some form of Judaism had been established amongst the leading tribes and that might just possibly have included those Kinda who migrated to Oman, and even perhaps their allies the Shanu'a Azd. Certainly there is mention of Jews, notably at Sohar, but that was probably among its merchant community, and there is nothing at all to indicate, one way or the other, that there were converts amongst the Arabs. On the other hand, the Nestorians had position in the Sasanid domain, and the fact that they used Aramaic as a spoken and written language, and Syriac as the written language of the Church and its liturgy, may well have familiarized the Arabs with Christianity and prepared the way for the Arabs to convert.<sup>7</sup>



### Christianity<sup>8</sup>

Whatever the origins of Christianity in the Sasanid realm, the important date is 410 AD, when the first synod of the *catholicos* of Seleucia-Ctesiphon set up the organization of the so-called Nestorian church, that is, the followers of Nestorius (c. 381–441), bishop of Constantinople, who emphasized the dual nature (diphysite) of Jesus and was deposed by the Council of Ephesus (431). The split became even more politicized following the council ordained by the Byzantine emperor at Chalcedon in 441, and from 484 Nestorianism effectively became the official Christian Church in the Persian empire. In 424 the Synod of Mar Dadisho, at which the Eastern Church proclaimed its independence of Antioch, added a sixth province to the original five set up by Mar Isaac. For obvious political reasons the Metropolitan was established on the Persian side at Rêv Ardashîr, and whilst his authority extended over all the Nestorian communities in the *Arḍ al-Hind* (India, Ceylon, etc.), the main communities within the Gulf appear to have been on the Arab side in Bêt Qatraye. That originally roughly corresponded with Bahrayn and Yamâma, but a century-and-a-half later it designated the ecclesiastical province of the Hasa coastal area, Qaṭar, Bahrayn, and other islands off (p.71) the Qaṭîf coast. By the time of this first synod there was already an important Christian community in north-eastern Arabia, perhaps partly due to contact with Hira and to the Nestorian monasteries implanted in the region; many of the 'Abd al-Qays and an important part of the Bakr b. W â'il seem to have been converts. Yet the only representative from the Arabian side of the Gulf at Dadisho's synod a decade-and-a-half after the church in the Gulf was organized was Yohannan, bishop of the Mazînayê (i.e. Mazûn).

This absence of Greater Bahrayn representatives and a gap in our knowledge of the Christian Church in eastern Arabia in the century or so following Dadisho's synod seem to coincide with the period when Lakhmid power gave way to that of Kinda, whose authority extended, temporarily at least, to Oman. And when something of the Nestorians next features, the only representative attending the *catholicos*'s synod of 444 was David, from Mazûn, and it was only with the restoration of Lakhmid authority under al-Mundhir III and his appointment by Kisra Anûshiravân over the Sasanid domains in Arabia that something re-emerges concerning the Bahrayn communities. Indeed, the Christian population may well have expanded in the late Sasanid period, for Hormizd IV (479–90), was very supportive of them. But the first decades of the seventh century were difficult, notably during the reign of Khusraw (Kisra) II and following the Muslim conversions. Although Rêv Ardashîr's attempt to break away from the Isho'ayb III, the *catholicos* of Adiabene (649–49), was averted, there was a breach with the Arab side of the Gulf, when Thomas usurped the title of Metropolitan, incorporating Bêt Qatraye, Hajar, Hatta (Khaṭṭ), and also Mazînayê. That, I suggest, was an assertion of independence by the Christian communities after the conquest of the coastal districts of Fârs by the Omani and Bahrayni contingents under 'Uthmân b. Abi'l- 'Âṣi (see Chapter 4). The Synod of Mar Georges I (661–81) in 'the fifty-seventh year of the Arab Empire' (676) attempted to patch up relations, and from this disturbed period feature the names of two bishops in Mazûn, Samuel (476) and Stephanus (676).

From this brief survey it is clear that Christianity was well implanted in Oman as well as the Bahrayn region. We know for a fact of two early prominent Omani Arabs who were Christians, Ka 'b b. Barsha al-Ṭâḥi (see below), and Ka 'b b. Ṣûr of the Laqîṭ Ḥârith Mâlik b. Fahm, who was appointed the first qadi in Basra. The history of Khirrîṭ al-Nâjî's uprising in 38/648–9 also

indicates that a great number of his B. Sâma followers had been Christians. And in the *ridda* wars it was one of the important leaders of the 'Abd al-Qays, a former Christian, who defended the Muslim cause in Bahrayn.

'Awtabi's account of conversion<sup>9</sup> starts with the call to Islam by the Prophet to the Kisra (Khusraw II Abarwêz, 591–628), who failed to respond. But after he was killed (February 628), his son, Shiyruya (Kawadh II Shêrôy), ordered the Marzban of Oman, Bâdhân or Fastijân, to send someone in whom he had confidence and who spoke Arabic and Persian to the Hijaz to find out more about this prophet. He selected the Christian Ka'b b. Barsha al-Ṭâhi (Azd), who was convinced by the Prophet, and on his return to Oman the Marzban went to report, leaving in charge a certain Maskân. So the Prophet wrote to the people (Arabs) of Oman, then under al-Julandâ b. Mustakbir, calling on them to convert, which they did, but a similar summons to the Persian *majûs* was refused, whereupon the Julandâ drove them out, great and small.

This compressed version may be put aside for the moment, except to note that Shiyruya's short reign of eight months in 628 is consistent with the Prophet's call to the world rulers to convert in 6/627–8. The more reliable reports start in 8/629–30, when the position of Julandâ was held by 'Abd and Jayfar ibnâ al-Julandâ (b. Mustakbir), a sort of joint rule that came to characterize the family in the next couple of centuries.<sup>10</sup> They could only recently have succeeded, since there is some conflict between the Omani and classical versions about whether their father became a Muslim.<sup>11</sup> While al-Sâlimi on this occasion favours the accounts based on al-Wâqidi, who is more or less followed by the other classical sources,<sup>12</sup> one suspects it is because the story is credible rather than for any intrinsic historic reasoning. In this account, the Prophet sent 'Amr b. al-'Âṣ with a letter to the Julandâ brothers calling them to Islam and detailing the standard conditions, although there are various versions of the letter.<sup>13</sup> Once 'Amr arrived at Sohar (the Omanis say at Dastajird, i.e. the fortified Persian quarter), he wrote to the Julandâ brothers who were in the desert country (i.e. the interior).<sup>14</sup> Having made contact with the more amenable 'Abd, he explained the nature of the religious obligations and the *ṣadaqa*, but 'Abd refused to act without consulting his elder brother. So 'Amr eventually got to see Jayfar, who initially proved difficult, but finally an understanding was reached. 'Amr stayed in Oman (**p.73**) until the death of the Prophet, miraculously foretold by a Jew,<sup>15</sup> whereupon he returned to Madina with a delegation of Omanis. 'Awtabi, aware of this classical version, attempts to compromise, saying that whilst it was to 'Abd and Jayfar the Prophet wrote, his father was still alive.

The classical sources say nothing about what happened to the Persians, merely adding that the *majûs* were subject to the *jizya* while the Muslims paid the *ṣadaqa*. This omission may be deliberate, since they were prejudiced against the Omanis, either for tribal reasons or because they were *shurât* (i.e. Ibâḍis). The Omani account more than makes up for this lacuna.<sup>16</sup> It relates that the Azd rallied to Jayfar who, having made the preliminary call on the *marâziba* and *asâwira* to convert or leave the country, joined with them in a mighty battle (at Rustaq?) in which Maskân was killed. They then fiercely besieged those that had taken refuge in the Dastajîrd fort, who finally sued for peace. This was granted on condition they left, along with their families, and abandoned all their property. This victory was celebrated by the Azdi poet Thâbit b. Quṭna al-'Ataki.<sup>17</sup>

This account clearly shows that it was Jayfar who was the military leader and that it was the Azd who rallied to him; again, after the death of the Prophet, it is only Azd who receive mention as being Muslims. This may simply be shorthand, since they were the most important tribe. But it is also stated that after 'Abd and Jayfar accepted Islam they sent to the leaders of the tribes who swore allegiance to Muḥammad, 'and compelled them to pay the *ṣadaqa*'. This little phrase may indicate that not all was plain sailing, and may even have required the use of force in the case of polytheists, a matter that would be covered up in the record.<sup>18</sup> That the Arabs enslaved each other (verb *sby*) in the early days is quite clear from the way 'Umar deplored it, while Ibn 'Ja far insists that while it is possible to reach *amân* agreements with polytheists, that does not apply to Arabs. Either they accept Islam or perish.<sup>19</sup>

Clearly, as in Yemen, there was a degree of tribal manoeuvring involved over accepting the Prophet's invitation. From the Julandâ point of view, such an alliance reinforced their position with the Azd, and enhanced their status in the Omani region as a whole.<sup>20</sup> It was the gamble that Jayfar (p.74) had eventually taken, having earlier told 'Amr that he was asking him to give up the bird in hand for two in the bush.<sup>21</sup> But the real incentive must have been to throw off Persian rule and acquire their property. No such base reasoning, of course, features in the literature. The nearest to material incentive we get is the Prophet's letter to the *wafds* of Thamâla and al-Ḥuddân, promising there would be no *khirâṣ* or *mikyâl* tax on their palms, simply 10 per cent of the dates assessed where they were brought to be dried. In other words, the Arabs would be far better off, for there would be no fixed tax or assessment of the dates while on the tree, rather the '*ushr* on the actual produce each year.

#### Dating<sup>22</sup>

Having reconstructed the general outline of events, the question of dating arises. When did 'Amr b. al- 'Âṣ arrive in Oman? The standard date given is the end of 8, but if that is correct the Prophet must have wasted little time in sending him, for it was the year he converted.<sup>23</sup> His departure, however, may have been a little more leisurely, for Ṭabari says it was after the farewell *ḥajj*, that is, 10/632. Whichever date is correct, it is almost certain this was not the first contact between the Prophet and the Omanis. If we consider the object of sending a man of such importance as 'Amr was to consolidate preliminary negotiations and to stir the more distant Gulf lands into an uprising at a time when Sasanid rule was in crisis, then the apparent anomalies in the different versions disappear. The letters to the Persians and the Arabs thus belong to the period of preliminary contacts, when the father of the Julandâ brothers was still alive. The classical sources tend to support this interpretation. In the story of the conversion in Bahrayn it is stated that it was al- 'Alâ al-Ḥaḍrami who was the Madinese missionary, the same man, Ibn Sa' d (d. 229/844) says,<sup>24</sup> who had been previously sent to the Omanis. This statement occurs in the context of writing about the Omani Azd deputation to the Prophet, led by Asad b. Yabraḥ al-Ṭâḥi. Is this the same Ṭâḥi or at least another member of the tribe whom we have already encountered being sent by the Marzban to find out more about the Prophet? I am inclined to think so, for we come across Ka' b b. Barsha yet again, when the Julandâ brothers consulted him after 'Amr b. al- 'Âṣ arrived with the Prophet's letter. Be (p.75) that as it may, at the request of this Oman mission a man called Mudrik al-Khûṭ (an 'Abdi?) was sent back with them to look after their affairs, by which may be understood to pursue negotiations. It is also clear from Ibn Sa' d that there was a follow-up mission to Madina under the leadership of one

Salma b. 'Iyâdh al-Azdi. And as we have seen, Ṭabari (i. 1461), writing of the first foreign missions in 6, specifies 'Amr b. al- 'Âṣ as coming to the brothers Jayfar and 'Abbâd b. al-Julandâ, although this is an impossibly early date, even when modified to 7, as per Ibn al-Athîr (ii. 208). More interesting is Balâdhuri, who states that it was Abû Zayd al-Anṣâri of the Khazraj who came to Oman with a letter from the Prophet, adding that he was one of those who assembled the Qur'ân in the Prophet's lifetime and instructed the Qur'ân and the *sunan*, a somewhat anachronistic statement depending on how it is read! He came according to one version in 8, and in another 6, and was followed by 'Amr b. al- 'Âṣ in 8, just after he converted. There is some sense in Abû Zayd's name, for the Khazraj were Azd, as too were the Bâriq to whom belonged another man we shall be shortly be coming across being sent to Oman, Ḥudhayfa b. Miḥsan.

What all this amounts to is that there was a degree of toing and froing between the Omanis and Madina, perhaps going back to the year 6, that is, when the Prophet started to come to terms with Mecca. The tribal groups of eastern Arabia were probing this Islamic movement developing on the other side of the Peninsula on the one hand, and missionaries were being sent to Oman to develop these contacts on the other. Caetani is wrong when he states that Oman was not subject to early Muslim propaganda. When the time was ripe, 'Amr b. al- 'Âṣ was sent to Oman to call for an open adherence to Islam and the overthrow of Persian rule (as too in al-Bahrayn). Jayfar and the Azd fulfilled that finally, probably in 10.<sup>25</sup> The time was propitious, for the Sasanid monarchy was in total disarray after Khusraw II was deposed in 8.

The same, it should be added, probably obtained in Hadramawt. It seems most unlikely that the Kinda nobility turned up in Madina in 10 with their marriageable womenfolk in tow just on the off-chance of **(p.76)** sealing an alliance by cross marriages. The unconsummated marriages of al-Ash'ath's sister, Qutayla, and al-Asmâ' al-Jawniyya of the Walî'a with the Prophet, along with the promise of marriage given to al-Ash'ath by Abû Bakr's father, Abû Quḥâfa, to his daughter Umm Farwa,<sup>26</sup> were clearly part of a deal that had been negotiated by emissaries. Furthermore, knowledge of this forthcoming alliance by so powerful a grouping as Kinda may well have helped persuade the wavering Yamani leadership in Oman to fall into line also.

Be that as it may, it is only the Azd who are mentioned in the Omani conversion, and they alone reportedly made up the Omani delegation that accompanied 'Amr when he returned to Madina via Bahrayn on learning of the Prophet's death. Three names are mentioned,<sup>27</sup> 'Abd b. al-Julandâ, Ja'far b. Khashm al- 'Ataki, and Abû Ṣufra Sârif b. Zâlim al-Azdi.<sup>28</sup> All most suspect; the whole story is designed to demonstrate Abû Bakr and the Madinese Islamic nobility's praise for the Omanis. Thus 'Abd goes off and joins an expedition against the Jafna (Ghassânids) in which Ḥassân b. Thâbit al-Anṣâri sings his praises and the Omanis earn a letter of thanks from the Caliph, while Abû Ṣufra, the father of al-Muhallab, features as the main spokesman when they arrive at Madina. That is impossible, and his name has been inserted to ennoble the Muhallabids: but it is interesting to observe that he is only given a general Azdi *nisba*, rather than an 'Ataki one, while the third member seems to have been a genuine 'Ataki, that is, the real shaikhly clan of the 'Imrân. But the point to note again is that it is only Azd who are named as members of this mission.

Before leaving the subject of the conversion to Islam, it is necessary to emphasize that Oman conformed to a pattern whereby it was almost exclusively the Arabs who converted, a

phenomenon that, as Madelung shows,<sup>29</sup> was reinforced by 'Umar, in whose time Islam almost became an Arab national religion. Arabia was to be, as far as feasible, purely Muslim and Arab, while in the conquered territory beyond everything was done to identify Islam with the Arabs: 'It is evident that the caliph regarded all Arabs, whether Muslims or Christians, as his primary subjects.' Such Arabization of Oman and Bahrayn, where the populations were very much mixed with peoples of both Arabian and Persian origins, was **(p.77)** clearly going to produce social tensions that were to have an important influence on the implantation of Khâriji movements of all kinds, but at the beginning it made the Arabs (notably the Azd) a new elite and there was certainly no incentive for them to encourage conversion amongst the peasant and other 'ilj classes. On the contrary! The initial situation in Oman was similar to that in the conquered lands; everything indicates that the Omani Arabs continued to exploit the land as had the Persian ruling classes before them. It was only under Khâriji influence and finally the establishment of Ibâḍi rule that this situation was modified and the producing class encouraged to convert.

### Apostasy?

Again, while it is only Azd who feature in the next part of the story, as the renegades in a veritable apostasy war in the main classical version of events, or the rather minor Dabâ (colloquially Dibâ) affair in the Omani, in the former the loyal forces include leaders from other tribes, like Khirrît b. Râshid with the B. Nâjiyya and Sayhân b. Şuḥân with the 'Abd al-Qays. But the accounts of the *riḍḍa* are so confused that little reliance should be placed on them, and the inclusion of these names by the egregious Tamîmi, Sayf b. 'Umar (d. 180/791?) on whom Ṭabari (d. 310/923) relies, is almost certainly, as so often in this early history, a retrospective incorporation of figures who were later to be of importance.

Before trying to elucidate what really happened, it is perhaps necessary to say first a few general words concerning the context. It is easy to lapse into a sort of *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*, when talking abstractedly about Islam, particularly since the historiography is slanted to show that the epoch of the Prophet is the exemplar of the true community. It should be remembered that in 11–12 when the apostasy wars broke out, there was no Qur'ân as such, no exegesis (*ta'wîl* or *tafsîr*), no record of *sunna*, no *ijmâ'*, no 'ilm, while *fiqh* was a matter of opinion. All had been regulated by the Prophet and his divine revelations, and there is no great sign of religious teaching in the peripheral areas of the Peninsula. In other words, the constitution of the Islamic Community was essentially built around the person of the Prophet. What the letter of the Prophet to the Omanis called for was to bear witness that there was no God but God, that he was His Apostle, to pay the *zakât* *ṣadaqa*, to construct mosques, and to fight. In other words, to become followers of Muḥammad and the religion he had revealed.

Certainly its basic obligations were explained by those he sent out, if 'Amr's description of what he expounded to 'Abd al-Julandâ is to be believed, and it is interesting to note that a man with expertise in the early **(p.78)** collation of the Qur'ân as Abû Zayd al-Anşâri may have come to Oman. But the cost of joining the Muslim confederation was paying *ṣadaqa* *zakât*. This was collected by the official 'âmil appointed by the Prophet and not through the tribal chiefs, though some was redistributed locally. The levy was not great, but it is possible that it bore more heavily on the bedouin, who may well have escaped all exactions under Persian rule. So the basic dichotomy facing these peripheral areas was essentially: were they Muhammadans or

Muslims? In other words, was the new community a sort of supra-tribal confederation brought together by a set of opportunistic circumstances that had indeed brought great rewards, or was there a permanency in the associated divine message?

In Yamâma Musaylima preached the former: Muḥammad was not a true prophet or he would not have died, a point firmly rebutted in the letter sent by Abû Bakr to all the apostate tribes, at least according to Sayf.<sup>30</sup> In Oman and Hadramawt, however, the *ridda* arose over the issue of tax. And in both cases it was due to mismanagement or excessive zeal by the Madinan officials on the one side, and on the other a sense of wrong, an injustice in the eyes of excitable bedouin on whom the laws of Islam must have lain lightly, and who appealed to solidarity amongst their fellow (Yaman) tribesmen. In the case of Hadramawt,<sup>31</sup> the whole affair was apparently sparked off over a camel called Nugget,<sup>32</sup> in fact an assessment of a female camel (*nâqa*)! In reality it was much more about shifts in tribal relations as a result of the Prophet tending to support weaker tribes against the powerful lords from the Mu'âwiya Kinda, thereby promoting the Tujîb of the Sakûn and the so-called Ḥaḍramawt tribe (an old name probably representing a grouping of the origin al tribes in the area). More important still was manoeuvring over the paramount leadership of the Kinda, as shown in Chapter 2. The Prophet seems to have recognized the Walî a hegemony, granting them an assigned portion (*tu'ma*) of the taxes, but al-Ash'ath claimed that the B. Ḥarîth b. Mu'âwiya had just as much right to be considered successors to the Ḥujr Âkil Murâr line, and he tried to make out that they were related to the Prophet's family, a claim which apparently cut no ice. (Nevertheless, the explanation for that claim<sup>33</sup> does indicate that members of Quraysh did sometimes visit Hadramawt, so, unlike Oman, it was not totally *terra incognita*). So after the death of the Prophet and the mishandling of affairs by the governor, part of the Mu'âwiya Kinda was ripe for rebellion. It was sparked off by the B. 'Amr b. Mu'âwiya refusing the she-camel assessment, **(p.79)** whereupon al-Ash'ath in turn refused to pay the alms and recognize Abû Bakr. The Kinda rebels probably never expected that the Madinans could ever do anything about it: 'We are the furthest Arabs from Abû Bakr, will Abû Bakr send troops against us?'<sup>34</sup>

Details of the war need not concern us, except to note that the massacre of those who surrendered after the siege of Nujayr was perhaps a warning to other former Judaic tribes, but it left huge resentment. Al-Ash'ath, whose defiance had ended in full rebellion, was lucky to be pardoned, having obtained a safe conduct for himself and his clan in return for opening the gate of the fort, and there is a hint of treachery in his negotiations. Be that as it may, it was the end of the B. Walî'a and he was recognized as 'king', crowned 'in the manner to which a king of Qaḥṭân used to be crowned', and his marriage to Umm Farwa confirmed when he arrived in Madina.

The situation in Oman, however, needs careful examination, for it is portrayed as one of the major areas of apostasy in the classical sources. There are three basic versions (plus variations) of what happened; that of Ṭabari,<sup>35</sup> deriving from Sayf and his sources; that deriving from al-Wâqidi (d. 207/823); and the local Omani version.<sup>36</sup> The Ṭabari version is by far the fullest and gives the impression of being accurate by the very details it contains and the logical sequence of events. Combined with Bal'ami (iii. 307-10), who tends to interpret Ṭabari in the light of his own background knowledge of the former Persian provinces in Arabia, an apparently convincing story unfolds. Which is a great deal more than can be said about the alternative non-Omani

---

account(s), which lack not only historical but geographical coherence, with generals charging backwards and forwards across the Arabian Peninsula in the year 11. According to Ṭabari, after 'Amr b. al- 'Âṣ returned to Madina, Laqîṭ b. Mâlik al-Azdi, a rival of the Julandâ who had the sobriquet *Dhû'l-Tâj* (i.e. holder of the royal authority), rose up declaring himself a prophet and successfully gained control of Oman, whose people apostatized. The Azdi brothers Jayfar and 'Abbâd ('Abd b. al-Julandâ) had to take refuge in the mountains and the 'sea', from where they wrote to Abû Bakr asking him to send an army to restore the situation. Bal'ami adds that Laqîṭ's family had once held the title of Julandâ in pre-Islamic times, but after he lost the official Persian appointment had been living in Jayfar's entourage. There is a subtle difference between Ṭabari and Bal'ami. While Sayf (p.80) implies that Laqîṭ set himself up as a prophet rather *à la* Musaylima and caused the tribes to apostatize, Bal'ami shows that Laqîṭ simply profited from the fact that the tribes were apostatizing to regain power.

Abû Bakr sent two armies to deal with the apostates, Ḥudhayfa b. Miḥsan (in fact al-Ghulfânî al-Bâriqî al-Azdi<sup>37</sup>) for Oman, and 'Arfaja (b. Harthama al-Bâriqî) destined for Mahraland after having helped in Oman. The Bâriq, it should be noted were, like their 'cousins' the Khuzâ'a, western Azd, and it was Arfaja who shortly after commanded the western Azd when 'Umar opened up the Iraq front. 'Ikrima b. Abi Jahl (who had suffered a defeat at Musaylima's hands in Yamâma) was then ordered to redeem himself and join Ḥudhayfa and 'Arfaja. So the three generals wrote from a place called Rijâm<sup>38</sup> to the Julandâ brothers, and joined up with the force they assembled at Sohar. Meantime, Laqîṭ retired on Dabâ and prepared for war, but the allies managed to persuade some of his supporters, notably the B. Judayd ('Amr b. Mâlik b. Fahm: variant, and more likely, Ḥadid, of the Farâhîd), to return to the fold before advancing on Dabâ. A fierce battle ensued, and the Muslims were on the point of defeat when, providentially, reinforcements from the B. Nâjiyya under Khirrîṭ b. Râshid and the 'Abd al-Qays under Sayhân b. Şuḥân arrived and saved the day. Bal'ami adds that Jayfar had written to those 'Abd al-Qays living in Oman and who were well disposed towards him, asking for their help. A massacre followed in which 10,000 polytheists were killed, their families taken captive, and their goods made booty, the *khums* being sent with 'Arfaja to Abû Bakr. It was agreed that the two remaining generals should stay in Oman until things quietened down, whilst 'Ikrima carried on with the campaign in Mahra, Jayfar sending with him those of his troops that could be spared, from the tribes of Nâjiyya, Azd, 'Abd al-Qays, Râsib, and B. Sa'd (some of whom had presumably come with 'Ikrima). We will not pursue the Mahra campaign, which in any case is pretty incomprehensible, except to note that the Mahra seemed divided along geographical lines, those of the (coastal) plains and those of the uplands (*jôl*): it was the latter who had apostatized. (The Mahra, it should be remembered, at that time also extended far further into southern Oman).

Thus the accounts of Ṭabari and Bal'ami. Ibn al-Athîr (ii. 284-5) follows them, in a slightly abbreviated version, while Balâdhuri (*Futûḥ* 76-7) merely says that the Azd apostatized under Laqîṭ b. Mâlik, *Dhû'l-Tâj* and (p.81) went aside to Dabba (*sic*). Abû Bakr sent Ḥudhayfa b. Miḥsan al-Bâriqî of the Azd and 'Ikrima b. Abi Jahl b. Hishâm al-Makhzûmi (*sic*) against him; Laqîṭ was killed and the captives of Dabba sent to Abû Bakr. He then adds that while the Azd returned to Islam some other tribes apostatized and went to al-Shiḥr, where 'Ikrima attacked and plundered them, although the Mahra themselves made their peace with him. Already in Balâdhuri we have a hint that the Ṭabari (Sayf) version is exaggerated, while the Mahra account is quite at variance. The (Pseudo?) Wâqîdi version<sup>39</sup> starts as follows. After 'Ikrima moved on

---

Mârib in his Yemen campaign, the people of Dabâ learnt that he was fighting their *bani 'amm*, the Kinda, and the tribes of al-Yaman. So they drove out Ḥudhayfa who had been appointed *'âmil* by Abû Bakr and he fled and took refuge with 'Ikrima. This is a fascinating detail, for it is indicative of the Kinda-Azd unity that operated in southern Arabia. It certainly makes sense that if anyone was going to react to what was going on in southern Yemen, the first to do so would be the Omani Kinda inhabiting the Dabâ hinterland. In fact, I believe that this was what did happen. Balâdhuri says that while the Azd returned to the fold, certain other tribes made for al-Shiḥr, and that is most likely to be the Kinda going to the help of their paternal cousins.

Be that as it may, Ḥudhayfa now wrote telling Abû Bakr what was happening, and the furious Caliph ordered 'Ikrima to deal with the apostates and send him prisoners; after which he should join Ziyâd b. Labîd and help bring Hadramawt to heel. So 'Ikrima and his force set off for Dabâ. Geographically all this is odd. To go from Mârib to Oman by land would have involved passing via Hadramawt and the South Arabian territory controlled by the rebel al-Ash'ath, traversing the wilderness between Dhofar and the Ja'lân inhabited by the Mahra apostates, and then marching through Oman to reach Dabâ. Or alternatively, going all the way round by central Arabia, al-Yamâma, and al-Bahrayn (which were seriously apostatizing) and march along the barren 'UAE' Coast. Perhaps they went by boat! In any case, according to Sayf, 'Ikrima was campaigning in al-Yamâma. One suspects the Madinese were not very good geographers.

Anyhow, having arrived, 'Ikrima did battle, killing a hundred men, whereupon the remainder took refuge in the town's fort, to which he laid siege. So they asked for a *ṣulḥ*, offering to pay *zakât* and restoring friendly relations. 'Ikrima insisted on unconditional surrender. Thereupon the Muslims entered the town, killed the leading people, plundered their wealth and enslaved their women and families, and sent 300 of their **(p.82)** warriors to Abû Bakr, along with 400 women and children. (It is worth perhaps noting the parallels with the situation in Hadramawt, where the apostatizing population were called on to surrender unconditionally and then massacred.) 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭâb pleaded for them, but they were imprisoned in Dâr Ramla Bint al-Ḥârith,<sup>40</sup> along with those Hadrami Kinda apostates spared after the surrender of Nujayr. When Abû Bakr died he freed them and told them they could go where they liked. Some returned to their country and some to Basra after it had been founded; Abû Ṣufra, al-Muhallab's father, was amongst them. Then 'Ikrima went to join Ziyâd b. Labîd ...; whereupon starts the al-Ash'ath and Hadramawt story. Yâqût seems to mix the Sayf and Wâqidi versions in his account (*Buldân*, art. Dabâ). He makes clear that the name of the tax-collector (*muṣaddiq*) was Ḥudhayfa b. Miḥsan al-Bâriqi al-Azdi (not Ḥudhayfa b. 'Amr as per al-Wâqidi), himself originating from Dabâ, who had been appointed after the people accepted Islam to collect and distribute the tax. When they apostatized under Laqîṭ b. Mâlik al-Azdi, Ḥudhayfa advised Abû Bakr, who in turn wrote to 'Ikrima b. Abi Jahl whom the Prophet had appointed *Amîr* of the *ṣadaqât*. His role, however, is left rather vague, for although Yâqût follows Wâqidi for actual events, it is Ḥudhayfa alone who conducted the campaign, in which a hundred were killed, Dabâ besieged, the rebels surrendered unconditionally, and it was he who dispatched the prisoners for whom 'Umar pleaded. Amongst these were Abû Ṣufra (Muhallab's father), then a stripling.<sup>41</sup> Yâqût adds that 'Ikrima stayed in Dabâ as *'âmil* for Abû Bakr, a demonstrably false statement. As too the Abû Ṣufra story, as was perfectly obvious to Ibn Qutayba<sup>42</sup> (a *fortiori* if he was supposed to be the spokesman for the Omani delegation which accompanied 'Amr b. al-'Âṣ back to Madina!)

---



Turning now to the local version. There is no mention of the *ridda* in the late Omani *sîras* (the *Kashf*, etc.), but 'Awtabi twice gives an account,<sup>43</sup> taken up by al-Sâlimi who also gives a version from the early *Sîra* of Khalaf b. Ziyâd al-Baḥrani, alongside that of Ibn al-Athîr (his standard classical source rather than Ṭabari), which he states was quite false and without basis: that Ibn Durayd knew and believed the Omani story is indicated in his *Ishtiqaq* (p. 501). This Omani account runs as follows. Ḥudhayfa b. Miḥsan al-Ghalfâni al-Bâriqi was sent to Oman by Abû (p.83) Bakr as his 'âmil. He had no problems with tax-collection until he came to Dabâ, which belonged to the *wuld* al-Ḥârith b. Mâlik b. Fahm. His collectors assessed the tax of a woman of the al-'Uqât section as a mature sheep. 'Awtabi makes clear that the collector had come to Dabâ specifically to tax the B. al-Hârith, and when dealing with that tribe quotes al-Andalus (i.e. Ibn al-Ḥazm), that the B. al-Iqy (i.e. 'Uqât) take their name from one of his five sons (confirmed also by Ibn al-Kalbi and Ibn Durayd).<sup>44</sup> She refused and offered a year-old goat or a kid ('*utud aw 'anaq*), but they took the sheep. Whereupon she cried out 'Yâ Âl Mâlik' and the tribesmen came to her rescue. Ḥudhayfa, believing this to be a cry from the *jâhili* days and fearing the tribe had apostatized, attacked the people of Dabâ and sent a few (as prisoners) to Madina. As a result, a deputation including leaders from what in fact were the three Mâlik b. Fahm tribes of the region, a Ṣulaymi ('Amr), Khamâmi (the most influential local shaikhly group), and a Ḥadîdi (Farâhîd), went to Abû Bakr, though some say he had just died and it was 'Umar whom they saw. They explained they had never turned away from Islam, never refused the *zakât*, and done all that was prescribed. Yet his appointee had placed restrictions on them, which is why they had come. Here the accounts vary slightly. While one has it that 'Umar released the prisoners, another says they were ransomed at 440 dirhams a head.<sup>45</sup> The latter is more likely, for if Sayf is to be believed, after 'Umar set his hand against Arabs owning other Arabs, he laid down various levels of ransoms, including for the people of Dabâ.<sup>46</sup> On the other hand, if the *Sîra* of Abû Qaḥṭân<sup>47</sup> is followed, 'Umar released the Dabâ prisoners, not out of magnanimity but on principle, since he considered the reason that Ḥudhayfa had taken them was not valid. Furthermore, Abû'l-Mu'thir<sup>48</sup> makes a distinction between two kinds of apostates: those who remained Muslims but refused obedience (*khala' ṭâ'a*) to Abû Bakr, and those who denied Islam and set up false prophets, like Musaylima. The former were not *mushrikûn*, so there was no *ghanîma* or *sibâ'*, they were killed until they reaffirmed the rule (*ḥukm*) of the Qurân and obedience to Abû Bakr; the latter were treated as *mushrikûn* until they reverted to Islam.

However, I would suggest that these *ex post facto* glosses are rather too neat. It occurs in the context of *sibâ'* and *ghanîma* in the former case and (p.84) of *murtadd* in the latter. The Ibâḍis do not like to have to admit that the person who really set the precedent of not taking captives and plunder from other Muslims was 'Ali after the Battle of the Camel, and so try to push back the precedent to this Dabâ affair. In fact 'Umar released the prisoners because he disliked the idea of Arabs being slaves and in due course ordered that all such held by the state be freed.

Can these accounts be reconciled without resorting to the expediency of compromise? One problem is scale. All accounts agree that there was a degree of *ridda* in Oman. It was a time when the tribes elsewhere were apostatizing and it was the very issue of the *ṣadaqa* that was causing, or at least providing the excuse for, revolt.<sup>49</sup> My own view is that as a historian Ṭabari selected Sayf's because it made sense of what were perhaps a series of uncoordinated events to fit in with a general picture about the apostasy wars. Sayf has tried to create a general picture

---

that is coherent, even if it often does not stand up to close analysis. The generals concerned were all involved in their own expeditions, and highly jealous of each other. Abû Bakr's orders to proceed to Oman are too logical to be true; they look suspiciously like an attempt to bring some sort of order into the conflicting accounts of what they were actually doing. In the Wâqidi version there is no mention of 'Arfaja, while 'Ikrima is involved in a way that is far from clear, particularly *apud* Yâqût. Hudhayfa, on the other hand, is central to all accounts. In Ṭabari he was the man sent to direct the Oman operation. Wâqidi says he was already in Oman, appointed by the Prophet (Yâqût even makes out he was a local), while the Omani version says Abû Bakr appointed him in 11. All classical sources (except Yâqût, whose statement that it was 'Ikrima who stayed in Oman as Abû Bakr's *'âmil* is demonstrably false) say Hudhayfa remained there. The statement that he was actually appointed *'âmil* by the Prophet also runs counter to these sources who assert it was 'Amr b. al- 'Âṣ who was the Prophet's appointee. One can only assume that Yâqût tries to make out that Hudhayfa was himself from Dabâ on the basis that he was an Azdi; but in fact he was a Bâriqi Azdi from western Arabia, and indeed it is in this genealogical context that 'Awtabi first mentions the Dabâ affair. But it does show that the Madinese were using their Azdi connections.

His date of appointment in 11 is confirmed by Ṭabari elsewhere (i. 1880-1), and provides another clue that Sayf is rationalizing. Caetani<sup>50</sup> has worked out in considerable detail the sequence of events concerning the apostasy wars and shown that they really belong to 12. That would make sense of the fact that the Omani delegation which went (**p.85**) to Madina to make representation over the Dabâ affair arrived just before or just after the death of Abû Bakr (i.e. Jumadi II 13/August 634). In other words, I would suggest that the conclusion Hinds makes concerning Sayf's account of the conquest of Fârs (see Chapter 4), that it is a rattling good story but not fact, applies to the Dabâ affair too.<sup>51</sup> As he states: 'In short, Sayf's account ... exhibits the usual Sayfian characteristics: the chronology is deviant and the sequence of events is eccentric; the shaping of the account is tendentious ... and it is embellished with odd and fanciful detail ...' Having cast doubts on the scale of operations and its chronology as recounted in Ṭabari, we might begin to wonder how far there was in fact apostasy in Oman. With three generals plus the local leaders converging upon the poor apostates what can Sayf do but produce a massive opposition and the massacre of 10,000 of the faithless? Compare that with Wâqidi's 100 killed and (*apud* Yâqût a further 100 executed). And note too that his version confines events to the Dabâ region alone.

Who, then, is this Laqîṭ b. Mâlik al-Azdi, *Dhû 'l-Tâj*? In fact, a garbled name. 'Awtabi shows that the Dabâ area was in the *dâr* of the al-Ḥârith b. Mâlik b. Fahm, and one of its most important clans was the Laqîṭ (cf. also *Ishtiqaq*, 500). They may well have resented the fact that it was the Julandâ who collected the tax from this *sûq al- 'arab* in pre-Islamic times, and that their authority continued to be recognized under the new regime. The woman who felt she had been wronged was from a Ḥârithi clan, the 'Uqât, and used the tribal war-cry, 'Yâ Âl Mâlik', for the support of all the Mâlik b. Fahm tribes of the area. That it was they alone who responded is confirmed by the fact that only their representatives went to Madina to complain of the restrictions Hudhayfa had placed on them. As for the appearance of Khirrîṭ b. Râshid al-Nâji and Sayhân b. Şuhân al-'Abdi, this is simply Sayf over-egging the account with names of leaders that feature twenty-five years later, and possibly an attempt by him to promote the Nizâri tribes of

the region. That the Muslim forces were joined by elements of other tribes is more than likely, and Sayf does indicate at another point that they were joined by odd groups from the B. Nâjiyya and 'Abd al-Qays already in Oman. As for the appearance of Abû Şufra in al-Wâqidi's version: what more natural than the Madinese traditionalist to associate the one family which he certainly knew of with the one important piece of early history concerning that rather remote country called Oman?

In breaking down the Sayf—Ṭabari version and pointing out the weaknesses in al-Wâqidi's, one is not accusing the authors of deliberate falsification, although it should always be borne in mind that denigrating the **(p.86)** Azd and Ibâḍi Oman characterizes the classical authors, and Sayf, as a strong partisan of Tamîm, in particular. Nor is the Omani version necessarily the correct one; it will naturally play down discreditable events. Nevertheless, it is in substance valid, for when we get down to the fundamentals there is little in the classical versions that is incompatible with the Omani one. The essentials would seem to be that there was trouble over tax-collecting with the northern Ḥârith. Ḥudhayfa, aware of the general danger of apostasy, decided to deal firmly with the situation. Lacking any standing force of his own, he called on the Julandâ brothers' support to attack the insurgents, a number of whom were killed in a battle, besieged the town itself, and after it surrendered executed some and sent others as prisoners to Abû Bakr, plundering and enslaving their families. He also placed restrictions on the suspect Mâlik b. Fahm tribes of the region. In the meantime, the Caliph had instructed other forces campaigning in central Arabia and Bahrayn, and in southern Arabia, to hold themselves in readiness to go to Oman if needs be. Following Ḥudhayfa's firm action the local Mâlik b. Fahm leaders went off to Madina in righteous indignation, protesting their loyalty and pleading for the release of their kinsman from the Dabâ fracas. What the Caliph had to say indicates that, while all was forgiven, 'Umar was not really taken in by these protestations of innocence.

But whichever version of the apostasy wars in Arabia is followed, what matters in the end is that the Madinese government acted firmly and demonstrated that Islam was there to stay. From now on, all that happens occurs under the umbrella of belonging to the Muslim faith.

### Government in Oman in Early Islamic Times

One thing all this history of the first years of Islam shows is that it is highly confusing, based on hearsay collected at least 150 to 200 years later, and on occasion deliberately distorted by interested parties. It has only been pursued so as to try and sort out some impression of Islamic beginnings in Oman and resolve certain of the worst inconsistencies in the sources.

Nevertheless, a tolerably clear picture of the division of responsibility in the conduct of government between the local and Madinese authorities does emerge. 'Amr b. al- 'Âs himself states<sup>52</sup> he was responsible for the *şadaqa*, a short-cut for saying the taxes from Muslims and non-Muslims alike, and the *ḥukm*, by which may be understood the overall conduct of government within an Islamic context. The Julandâ brothers assisted him. **(p.87)** We know from the Dabâ affair that the job of collecting the *şadaqa* entailed a group of assessors, but nothing indicates that 'Amr and Ḥudhayfa had any real bureaucratic or military organization; their support came from the rulers and people of Oman itself. Ḥudhayfa seems to have been 'Amr's replacement, but we know little of his early career; it is just possible he was there in Amr's time as a tax-collector and that he took over when he left and his appointment was

subsequently confirmed. Most sources agree he was still there when Abû Bakr died, while Ṭabari and Ibn al-Athîr show he was there at least to 17; there is also an implication that 'Umar placed him in charge of both Oman and al-Yamâma in 13, but that later he was responsible for Oman alone. It is even possible to read from less specific references to the governors in general that he was there to 20 or 21.<sup>53</sup>

Even assuming that 17 was meant to be the last year of his governorship, serious doubts arise that he was there any later than the start of 'Umar's Caliphate. According to the Iraq traditionists, Ḥudhayfa took part in the Iraq campaigns against the Persians as one of Muthannâ's commanders (in 14, rather than 13), and was involved in the campaign which finished at Qâdisiyya (16, not 14), and he was also concerned in founding Kûfa a year later.<sup>54</sup> A similar problem arises with the governors of Bahrayn, but here it is more easily resolved and provides the probable answer to the situation in Oman. About 15 'Uthmân b. Abi'l- 'Âṣi al-Thaqafi was appointed governor. Initially there appears to have been a certain amount of juggling with personalities and districts, but the outcome was the creation of a new province covering eastern Arabia, Bahrayn and Oman, and possibly Yamâma, under his control.<sup>55</sup>

'Uthmân then became increasingly involved with the campaign in Fârs and spent much of his time based in Tawwaj until 29, when a full campaign was launched against the Persians and for this purpose his army, consisting mainly of Bahraynis and Omanis, was integrated into that of the Basrans and he himself more or less retired (see Chapter 4). 'Uthmân's deputies at home and in the field were his brothers Mughîra, Ḥafṣ, Ḥakam, and Ḥârith. Local Omani sources say that 'Uthmân actually lived in Oman from 15 until after the Battle of Jalûla, when he received orders to lead a campaign on the Persian coast with his local forces, crossing over from Julfâr/Jurfâr. His brother Mughîra, then in Bahrayn, replaced him in Oman.

**(p.88)** The importance of this evidence concerning the early governors is that it shows how Oman developed in the Islamic state. Initially it features as an isolated area that has accepted Islam and is governed by an *'âmil* appointed by the Prophet and his successor. In 'Umar's Caliphate it starts to be drawn into the conquests and, with neighbouring Bahrayn, providing the contingents for the war against the Persians on the Gulf coast. The role of the *'âmil* consequently changes. Whilst in the Prophet and Abû Bakr's time it was to supervise and tax his province, under 'Umar he has also become a military commander at the head of an army drawn from an extensive regional command. Eventually this command reaches enormous proportions, and from 29 onwards we no longer have local governors or commanders in charge of the individual localities of the Gulf. Instead, in the eastern part of the Caliphate a centralized command based on Basra and/or Kûfa responsible direct to the Caliph is formed. Thus when Mu'âwiya appointed Ziyâd b. Abîhi to Basra in 45/665-6, his command included Khurâsân and Seistan, but subsequently he was also made responsible for Hind, Bahrayn, and Oman.<sup>56</sup> Later still, it extended to cover the whole of Iraq, Khurâsân, Azerbaijan, and Armenia as well. Within Iraq the two *qaḍas* of Basra and Kûfa had their own local governors,<sup>57</sup> but there is no mention of district governors in the Gulf, for this was considered part of the Iraqi province.

#### The Julandâ<sup>58</sup>

Who, then, controlled the actual territory of Oman? From a purely political point of view it was the Julandâ who held a kind of loose tribal hegemony. Although they were reported as assisting 'Amr b. al- 'Âṣ and presumably Ḥudhayfa, their role even then may have been more important:

Ya'qûbi reports that some say they were actually appointed the Prophet's *'âmil*s in Oman, and al-Sâlimi similarly remarks that some Omani authors claim that Abû Bakr confirmed them in their rule and that they were responsible for the *ṣadaqa*.<sup>59</sup> Be that as it may, with the development of the *'âmil*s' military role, control of local government passed back to the Julandâ brothers 'Abd and Jayfar. The last heard of their joint rule is after the Battle of Jalûla, when they were asked to help raise the force for 'Uthmân b. Abi'l-'Aṣi's campaign on the Persian coast.<sup>60</sup> By default, it is assumed that they died about the same time and were succeeded by 'Abd's son 'Abbâd (the classical sources frequently confuse their names), who ruled right through 'Uthmân and 'Ali's Caliphates (**p.89**) according to Oman sources, but in fact well beyond. However, it should be noted in passing that, according to Ya'qûbi, 'Ali did appoint a certain Hulw b. 'Awf al-Azdi as his *'âmil* in Oman and that he was killed when Khirrît b. Râshid al-Nâji took refuge there after his revolt against the Caliph. If this is correct then it perhaps indicates that he and his predecessors did appoint some sort of local official, probably at Sohar, the only centre of any economic importance at that time. As Hulw's *nisba* indicates, he may well have been an Omani, recruited locally or in Basra. But following the *fitna* and the establishment of Mu'âwiya's Caliphate, the impression given is that Oman itself slipped into a tribal backwater under the Julandâ, while the real action was taking place elsewhere, initially in the Fârs campaign and then in Basra and beyond. It was not until Hajjaj asserted his authority that a major expedition (c. 86/705) was mounted which brought Oman back under direct central government rule: at that time there was again a joint Julandâ rule, by 'Abbâd's sons, Sulaymân and Sa'îd.

Some relevant information concerning these two occurs in Balâdhuri's history of the Ḥanafi Khârîji state (cf. Chapter 5).<sup>61</sup> In 69/688-9 Najda b. 'Âmir al-Ḥanafi's general, 'Aṭiyya b. al-Aswad al-Ḥanafi, occupied Oman, at which time an important shaikh called 'Ubâd b. 'Abdullâh (sc. 'Abbâd b. 'Abd) had gained control of Oman. His two sons Sa'îd and Sulaymân were away in boats collecting tax. The Omanis rose against 'Ubâd and killed him, so 'Aṭiyya met little opposition, and when he left a few months later placed a man called Abû Qâsim in charge. Shortly after his departure Atiyya quarrelled furiously with Najda, apparently because he would only give him land command, and broke with him, going back to Oman, where he found that Sa'îd and Sulaymân had killed Abû Qâsim and regained power. The rest of the story shows that 'Aṭiyya was unable to reassert his position there and that the Bahrayni Khârîji state had only subsisted a few months.

Balâdhuri's description clearly shows considerable opposition to Julandâ rule. Furthermore, the fact that he uses the term *jabâ* without the normal additional of *ṣadaqa* indicates that their exactions did not conform to Islamic law and were exploiting the poor, largely non-tribal populations of the coasts. Jâbir b. Zayd's letters (see Chapter 6) do show attempts to set up Muḥakkima communities, but these were probably local and ephemeral, while his absolute interdiction for Muslims to purchase girls who had been enslaved as plunder in Oman and the general insistence that no Muslim should buy anything that had been illegally seized, is indicative of the general disorder there.<sup>62</sup> So the Julandâ brothers' rule continued until Hajjaj's invasion (see Chapter 4), when (**p.90**) Oman was brought under the harsh government of one of his generals. With the succession of Sulaymân b. 'Abd al-Malik to the Caliphate, Yazîd b. al-Muhallab was restored to favour and appointed his brother Ziyâd, but under 'Umar II Oman was again brought back under Caliphate control, although his governor 'Umar b. 'Abdullâh al-Anṣâri

carried out a serious reform of the taxation system. But after the Caliph's death 'Umar simply handed back to Ziyâd, with the remark that this was the country of his people and his affair. And that seemed to be the end of Umayyad appointments. We shall see in due course the role of the Sa'îd b. 'Abbâd family and the rivalry with that of Jayfar b. al-Julandâ when we come to study the history of establishing Imamate rule in Oman.

To sum up. For the first twenty or so years there was a Caliphate official directly responsible for the province, but as the tide of the Arab conquests moved away from the regions bordering the Gulf, Omani activity moved with it, and their homeland became a sort of backwater under the loose hegemony of the Julandâ, who were threatened only by the Khâriji states in Bahrayn and Yamâma. Later, as Oman became increasingly a refuge for malcontents from Iraq, it was reconquered by Hajjaj and military government installed for a few years, but after 'Umar II's time Oman once again lapsed back under Julandâ rule. The reforms that were brought in by the first Imam, al-Julandâ b. Mas'ûid, clearly show the misgovernment that had prevailed, while details in rulings by the early Ibâdî '*ulamâ'* indicate how the precious heritage of the land and its irrigation system had been neglected, and the settled population exploited by its new Arab masters.

The political scene for the Omanis was being formed elsewhere, and it is to their story first in Fârs, and then in Basra and beyond, that we shall turn in the next chapter. Before doing so, it is worth emphasizing here that it had nothing to do with the Julandâ. No Julandâni features amongst the Omani leaders abroad, and this is important, for it contrasts strongly with the situation in Kûfa, where the Kinda and Hamdân *ashrâf* were in control. True, the Omani leaders came from important clans, 'Atîk, Jahâdim, Huddân, Hinâ, Yaḥmad, Ma'âwil, Ṭâḥiyya, but there was no overall tribal leadership of the Omani Azd. That role eventually fell to the Muhallabid family, but it was as a military commander that al-Muhallab earned his spurs and led to the government appointments which resulted in him and his son Yazîd becoming leaders in the Yamani faction in Iraq. Whence both the strengths and weaknesses of the Muhallabid family. Their power was considerable but ephemeral. That of the tribal families just cited persisted, and their names will continue to recur in our story and beyond, many right down to the twentieth century.

Notes:

(1) cf. *Muṣannaf*, MNHC edn., i. 33 followed by an apposite 'but God knows best!'

(2) Crone 1987.

(3) *Mahomet* (Paris, 1961; 2nd edn. 1968 and English trans. 1971).

(4) 'Awtabi, A118v (cf. *Tuḥfa*, i. 53 ff.) and A280v/AB 209.

(5) Cf. Lecker 1999. The *isnâd* for the story as given there is 'Ali b. Ḥarb al-Mawṣili ‹ Ibn al-Kalbi ‹ his father ‹ 'Abdullah al-'Umâni ‹ Mâzin b. Ghaḍûba himself. 'Ali b. Ḥarb, great-great-grandson of Mâzin, was born in Azerbaijan (174/791) and died in Mosul in 265/878-9 (Al-Salmi, Thesis, 224).

(6) Ibn Durayd in Suppl. to Ibn al-Kalbi's *K. al-Aṣnâm*, trans. Faris, 1952, 54. *KD* has a variant spelling Nâj(i/a)r.

(7) Cf. Holes 1995 (introduction to the poem).

(8) Based on Asemanus 1725, Le Quien 1740, Chabot 1902; Labourt 1904; Baudrillart *Dictionnaire* 1912; Fiey 1993. Cf. also synthesis by Potts 1990: ii. chs. 5 and 6, and Hoyland 1997: ch. 5.

(9) A271r, cf. *Tuḥfa*, i. 53 ff. Also Wilkinson 1969 (appendices) and al-Rawas 2000 for some preliminary study of material covered in this chapter.

(10) Cf. Wilkinson 1975.

(11) A249v, cf. *Tuḥfa*, i. 35–6, 52, 57.

(12) Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqât*, I. ii. 18; Ṭabari, i. 1561, 1600–1, 1686, 1894; Balâdhuri, *Futûḥ*, 76, as also 'Awtabi himself.

(13) Cf. Lecker 2005.

(14) Balâdhuri says that he found them at Sohar, but this is not confirmed by any other report, including the supposedly first-hand account of 'Amr himself given by Ibn Sa'd.

(15) That is also found in classical sources, e.g. Ṭabari, i. 3251.

(16) Reading together A271r–272r, *Tuḥfa*, i. 47 and 59, *KD* 451–2, *KK* 8–9.

(17) Is this the poet al-Ataki whom 'Awtabi speaks of in his *Ansâb* as having been at Ibn Durayd's funeral (321/933)?

(18) See also my 1974 article for a local version of *bayâsira* origins as slaves because of their refusal to convert.

(19) For the early view that Arab Christians were not *ahl al-kitâb*, an argument embraced by Jâbir b. Zayd, see Francesca 2004: 352–3.

(20) The *Kashf* says that Jayfar sent to the extremes of Oman, to Dabâ (in other words, the area of Arab autonomy in the north), and to the Mahra and al-Shiḥr, the outer borderland in the south, calling them to Islam.

(21) For a full discussion of these letters see Dridi 2007.

(22) I use the *hijri* years here, as the events are entirely associated with the very earliest days of Islam.

(23) Cf. al-Wâqidi, *K. al-Maghâzi*, ii. 745; Balâdhuri, *Futûḥ*, 77. It is worth noting that one of Wâqidi's sources, from whom also derives some of Ibn Sa'd's material, was a *mawlâ* of the Ḥuddân who died in Ṣan'a' c. 153/769 (Lecker 2005: 6).

---

(24) I. ii. 50-1, 81.

(25) It is perhaps relevant to note that two mosques are known in Oman with two *qiblas*, the well-known Masjid al-Qiblatayn at Nizwâ, and now a recent archaeological discovery at an early Islamic settlement in the Ibrâ area (J. Schreiber, in *PSAS* 35, 2005). Before springing to the conclusion that these *qiblas* pointed to Jerusalem and Mecca respectively (which in any case is incompatible with the local tradition that the Nizwâ mosque dates to 15) it should be borne in mind (a) that there are no reports on the precise orientation of the two *qiblas*; (b) that in the earliest days of Islam orientating a *qibla* must have been pretty approximate and that the angle between the two directions from Oman was not great. Much more likely is that the second *qibla* was an adjustment to Mecca made at a later date. For the issue of changing the *qibla* during the Prophet's lifetime see Burton 1990 and Hoyland 1997.

(26) See Lecker 1994: 350-3.

(27) *Tuhfa*, i. 62 ff.

(28) Ibid. I am not quite sure where al-Sâlimi gets this, except through Omani tradition (cf. *KK* 10). However, in al-Wâqidi's *K. al-Ridda* (pp. 55-6) these three names feature (except for the 'Ataki who is called Jayfar b. Ja'far with no *nisba*). They were accompanied by 70 of the prominent Omani knights. He then quotes the poet 'Uqba b. Nu'mân al-'Ataki. This would seem to be a different 'Ataki poet from the *shâir al-Azd*, Thâbit b. Quṭna al-'Ataki, quoted in connection with the victory over the Persians, but it does indicate that the 'Atîk poets may well be the historical transmitters of some of the glories of the tribe, and like all poets, inclined to exaggerate!

(29) 1997: 74-5.

(30) Ṭabari, i. 1881 ff.

(31) The following account is based on Ṭabari's relation of the apostasy war there; Lecker's two 1995 articles and Mad'aj 1988: ch. 3.

(32) Ṭabari, trans. x. 178.

(33) Kister 1976: 58-9.

(34) Ibn al-Ash'ath (*ap.* Ibn Sa'd) quoted *EI2* suppl. ridda (Lecker).

(35) i. 1976-80; cf. Caetani, ii. 777.

(36) Lecker (in *EI2* ridda and 1995b: 649, n. 100) seems to subscribe to the view that the local Omani version, like that of Hadramawt, is a sort of mild apologia to downplay the mainstream tradition. Since his work is liable to be considered authoritative, it is doubly necessary to reassess these versions.

(37) I have corrected the names and the *nisbas* given by Ṭabari here.



(38) Yâqût says this Rijâm is a high red mountain with *ridah* (hollows containing snow? fortifications?) on its slopes. J ʾ Y is a commonplace in local dialects. Are we dealing with the Jabal Riyâm, i.e. the Jabal al-Akhḍar? Note the colour 'green' has nothing to do with the colour of the rock but rather its fertility (cf. Mazaheri 1973: 141 and Wilkinson 1977: 42).

(39) *K. al-Ridda*, 99 ff.

(40) of the Tha'laba ... b. al-Najjâr Khazraj, i.e. the 'court' alongside the Prophet's mosque where he housed delegations visiting him (Lecker 1995b).

(41) Hence the incorporation in his biography of the Wâqidi version by Ibn Sa'd, VII. i. 72 (cf. also Ibn Khallikân, §725 on al-Muhallab).

(42) Cairo edn. of the *Ma'ârif*, 399-IO0 (not in that of Wüstenfeld).

(43) Under the rubrics of the Bâriq (from whom Ḥdhayfa), and again more fully when dealing with the subsequent Mâlik b. Fahm delegation which went to Madina: 'Awtabi, A219r, and 282v-83r.

(44) Cf. *Ishtiqaq*, 499; Ibn al-Kalbi, Escorial MS 66v. 'Awtabi gives the name at one point as 'Ufât, and this error is reproduced by al-Sâlimi.

(45) Ya'qûbi, ii. 148 has 400 dirhams. It is unfortunate that most of his account is missing, for although it appears to start as per Ṭabari, Ya'qûbi sometimes gives a different slant to things. For example, in the extant portion, he says that Ḥudhayfa killed Laqîṭ at Sohar. Unfortunately 'Umân is part of the missing section in his *K. al-Buldân* so that no cross-check can be made there.

(46) See Ṭabari, i. 2012.

(47) Whence presumably Qalhâti, BL MS 198r.

(48) Quoted 'Awtabi, *Ḍiyâ'* iii. 108.

(49) Cf. Beeston, in *Oriens*, 5: 16-22 on the tax revolt and the reversion to pre-Islamic practices in southern Arabia.

(50) *Annali*, ii. 553 ff., 774, n. 1.

(51) Despite Landau-Tasseron's defence (1990).

(52) Ibn Sa'd, I. ii. 18, cf. also Ṭabari, i. 1686.

(53) For the above para. see Balâdhuri, *Futûḥ*, 77; Ya'qûbi, ii. 156; Ṭabari, i. 2212, 2389, 2426, 2481, 2578-9, 2595; Ibn al-Athîr, ii. 346, 380, 396, 410. For this and the following discussion see also Wilkinson 1969 and Hinds 1984.

(54) Ibn al-Athîr, ii. 343, 359, 410-1 *et passim*; Caetani, *Annali*, iii. 273 ff., 633.

(55) See also Hinds 1984: 205. It is worth noting that Balâdhuri's report (in *Futûh*) quoted in n. 53 derives from Haytham b. 'Adi, whom we shall be coming across in connection with al-Rabî' b. Ḥabîb's *Athâr*.

(56) Ṭabari, ii. 73.

(57) *Ibid.* 1498.

(58) For references to the general background to their rule see Wilkinson 1975.

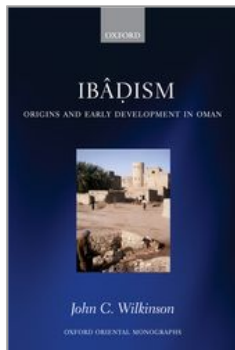
(59) Ya' qûbi, ii. 136; *Tuḥfa*, i. 67.

(60) 'Awtabi, A223r/AB160r.

(61) *Ansâb*, xi. 125-47.

(62) See in particular letter 1, §§ 7 and 8.

University Press Scholarship Online  
**Oxford Scholarship Online**



## Ibâdism: Origins and Early Development in Oman

John C. Wilkinson

Print publication date: 2010

Print ISBN-13: 9780199588268

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2011

DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.001.0001

### The Omani Tribes in Basra

John C. Wilkinson

DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.003.0004

#### **[ - ]** Abstract and Keywords

This chapter pursues the fortunes of the Azd and other 'Gulf' tribes in the Fârs campaign and then in Basra, their role in the Battle of the Camel, and the formation of the Azd *khums*. Misapprehension concerning the term Azd 'Umân has distorted this early history: all the Azd in Basra were Omani but there was a wave of new migrants, essentially bedu (who may well have been excluded by 'Uthmân) at the end of Mu'âwiya's reign and these new migrants played a crucial role in events in Basra at the start of the second civil war. Basra was now threatened by the Azâriqa, Khawârij extremists, and was saved by al-Muhallab, whose family were not originally of Omani *ashrâf* origins, but military leaders. This marked the real rise in Omani fortunes as Muhallab and his son Yazid received governorships of enormous dimensions and inevitably a growing determination of Hajjaj to break the powers of the great Yamani leaders, the Kindi al-Ash'ath from Kufa and Yazîd b. al-Muhallab al-Azdi from Basra.

*Keywords:* Fârs campaign, Basra, Battle of Camel, Azd, Azâriqa, Muhallab

#### The Fârs Campaign

The Omanis were first involved in the Islamic conquests on the Persian coast of the Gulf, and the history of the Fârs campaign has been admirably studied by Hinds,<sup>1</sup> to whom reference may be made for detail.

The preliminary initiatives in fact came from al- 'Alâ al-Ḥaḍrami, who had been appointed over Bahrayn in 8/629-30. There is some question of whether he was removed from office before the Prophet's death, but he was either reinstated or confirmed by Abû Bakr. In 14/635 he sent 'Arfaja b. Harthama al-Bâriqi on a maritime expedition during which he conquered an island off

the coast of Fârs: 'Arfaja is the mysterious general supposedly sent to deal with Oman and Mahra in Sayf's version of the *ridda* war, but who is not mentioned by the other sources. This unauthorized initiative seems to have displeased 'Umar, who had wanted him to reinforce 'Utba b. Ghazwân's small force in the Obollah campaign. So he instructed him to take over the campaign at the head of the Gulf, but he died en route, and it was 'Utba who went on to conquer Obollah, al-Furât, and Abazqubâdh, and died shortly after. Al-'Alâ's joint successors in Bahrayn were solely concerned with local affairs, but their conduct was less than satisfactory, and in 15/636 'Umar placed 'Uthmân b. Abi'l-'Âṣi al-Thaqafi in charge.

The Battle of Jalûla (late 16 or 17/637-8) secured all Iraq for the Muslims and was followed by the founding of Kûfa and Basra. The former was by far the more important in the early days, and was established as a permanent reserve base, with tribes that had mostly come from far away (including al-Ash'ath and his Kinda) to hold the Sasanid frontier and support others, notably in the Jazîra. It was financed from the Sawâd, which had passed into Arab hands with the conquest of al-Madâ' in (16/637). Basra, on the other hand, was very much a local affair, more or less superseding Obollah, and even at the time of 'Umar's death there seems to have been no real central government organization there. Their field of operation was in neighbouring al-Ahwâz in Khuzistân, where the campaigns lasted from 17 to 20 (638-41).<sup>2</sup> The *muqâtila* were principally **(p.92)** drawn from neighbouring Tamîm and Bakri clans, and only 300 or so came from further afield. Nevertheless, there was an Omani Azd presence more or less from the start, for 'Umar appointed a member of an Omani delegation, Ka'b b. Şûr al-Laḡîṭi, a former Christian, as qadi in Basra and he settled there, part of a group of eighteen Omanis. Ka'b may have come with the Tawwaj mission, but he belonged to the B. al-Ḥârith clan that had apostatized at Dibâ, and it is possible that he had been with the delegation that went subsequently to 'Umar, for some of the released prisoners went to Basra. Ka'b was killed at the Battle of the Camel (36/656), trying to mediate between the two sides.

The classical sources say little about the origins of the campaigns leading to the conquest of Tawwaj in 19/640, and detail has to be filled in from the Omani version. According to 'Awtabi, news reached 'Umar shortly after Jalûla that Sasanid forces were mustering in the coastal areas of Sîrâf and Fârs, so he instructed 'Uthmân b. Abi'l-'Âṣ to act and ordered the Julandâ brothers, 'Abd and Jayfar, to provide troops. 'Uthmân's force embarked at Julfâr and invaded the island of Bani Kâwân, which is probably to be identified with Qishm. It numbered some 2,600 or 3,000, mostly Azd, but also Râsib, Nâjiyya, and 'Abd al-Qays. The main leaders were Şabra b. Shaymân al-Ḥuddâni over Shanu'a, Yazîd b. Ja'far al-Jahḡami over Mâlik b. Fahm, and Abû Şufra (al-Muhallab's father) over 'Imrân. These names and some others involved in the campaign feature in ensuing events, and it is possible that not all are retrojections. Şabra is certainly a likelihood. There is more than one account of the various leaders at the Battle of the Camel (36/656), including that of the egregious Sayf, but most agree that the leading Azd figure was Şabra (although one says it was a Hamâmi<sup>3</sup>), while the field command (*rayya*) was in the hands of 'Amr b. al-Ashrâf al-'Ataki, who was killed along with thirteen members of his clan.<sup>4</sup> It was Sabra with whom Ziyâd b. Abihi took refuge a couple of years later, which again indicates he was the most prominent of the Azd in Basra, and he is also mentioned in the *wafd* of Arab tribes to Mu'âwiya b. Abi Sufyân.<sup>5</sup> That there was a Jahḡami (Jahḡim) in charge of the Mâlik b. Fahm makes good sense too, for it was a Jahḡami, al-Ḥârith b. Qays, to whom 'Ubaydallâh b. Ziyâd turned in 64 for refuge, having been advised by his father (who was aware of the tribal

obligation dating back to the end of 'Ali's time) to approach him should the need arise. Abû Şufra, however, makes no sense and is once again an attempt to **(p.93)** build respect for Muhallabid origins. It was almost certainly an 'Ataki who commanded the 'Imrân in this early campaign in Fârs: it was 'Amr b. al-Ashrâf al- 'Ataki who commanded and was killed at the Camel, and it was his son, Ziyâd b. 'Amr al- 'Ataki, who regained effective leadership of the Omani Azd after the Ma 'ni leader was killed in 64. And the leadership stayed with this family, for it was Ziyâd's son or brother, al-Ḥawâri, who fled Basra when it was threatened by Yazîd b. al-Muhallab in 101/720.<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, it was possibly in this early Fârs campaign that Abû Şufra did start to make a name for himself as a warrior. According to 'Uthmân's brother al-Ḥakam, who commanded the battle in which Shahrak was killed, the left wing was commanded by al-Jârûd al- 'Abdi and the right by Abû Şufra,<sup>7</sup> but that again is probably apocryphal. On the other hand, 'Awtabi makes clear that Abû Şufra was never in Basra in the early days, but stayed at Tawwaj, from where he went campaigning with 'Abd al-Raḥmân b. Samra al-Qurashi. He only appeared in Basra a few days after the Battle of the Camel, where he expressed disapproval of the Basran Azd's role. He was rewarded by 'Ali (whether for his politics or his military achievements is not clear) with the governorship of Nahr Tîra and the chieftainship of the Azd; if that means anything, it was as Azd's military commander. It was as a military and not tribal leader that Abû Şufra was distinguishing himself, and his son al-Muhallab was sent off at an early age to go campaigning in Khurâsân by Ziyâd b. Abîhi.

#### Tawwaj

Those who wish to follow the debate over the start of the campaign at Bani Kâwân may again be referred to Hinds's study. It will suffice to note that it was a relatively minor affair and the major battle against the *marzban* of Fârs, Shahrak, did not occur there (as one version states), but later, on the mainland. Nor does it matter whether it was 'Uthmân or his brother al-Ḥakam who was in charge; it was the latter who commanded at the major campaign when Tawwaj fell in 19/640. Who actually killed Shahrak is again of little import, except to note that one of the candidates was a Yaḥmadi. What is important is that thereafter Tawwaj became an official *mişr*, probably in 21/642 when 'Uthmân b. Abil'Âs made it his headquarters. By that time the Arabs had won the decisive Battle of Nihawand (21/642), and from then on serious summer campaigning started with occasional support from the governor of Basra, Abû Mûsâ al-Ash'ari. In fact Tawwaj was a re-colonization, a garrison town located on a site in Dashtestan in the modern Bushire province,<sup>8</sup> serving the **(p.94)** agricultural hinterland for Rêv Ardashîr and as a relay into interior Fârs, but separate from the local centre inhabited by the *majûs*.<sup>9</sup> The mention of Sîrâf in connection with the earlier campaign may well be a gloss, since it was not really until the next century that it started to replace the old Sasanid port for Fârs.

Whether or not the 'Abd al-Qays contingent was at the actual conquest of this region or had been left behind at Kâwân is another detail that may be ignored, except to note that after Tawwaj's *tamşîr* the Azd stayed there, seemingly alone. The 'Abdis, and possibly other non-Azd groups, were moved to Basra by 'Umar (d. 23/644), perhaps because those Arabs already ordered there expressed jealousy of the more favourable quarters of the Azd and Gulf tribes, perhaps to further the campaigns following the success of Nihawand, perhaps to redress balance between Muḍar and Rabî'a, or perhaps for a combination of reasons. So it was with

Azdi forces that 'Uthmân continued the campaign in Fârs, sometimes supported by Abû Mûsâ and the Basrans. Success was largely confined to the coastal region, and they failed to take the main strongholds of Iṣṭakhr and Jûr in the mountainous interior, probably because of insufficient forces. In 29/650 'Uthmân b. Abi'l-'Âṣ was more or less retired and 'Abdullâh b. 'Âmir b. Kurayz appointed to Basra, where he stayed until the Caliph's death in 35/655: at Kûfa 'Uthmân appointed Sa'îd b. al-'Âṣ.

#### Basra

Behind this reorganization in the Iraqi *miṣr*s lay pressure on the system established by 'Umar at Kûfa. Basra in the early days was a modest affair, essentially involving local Tamîm and Bakr b. Wâ'il. At Kûfa, on the other hand, virtually all the early-comers, numbering 10,000 or more, came from afar and were much more tribally disparate. Originally the Islamic campaigns had concentrated on Syria, with a secondary front opening into Jazîra and Iraq. Unlike the *junds* of Shâm, however, Kûfa was set up by 'Umar to cut across the tribal system through organizing it as a *dâr hijra*. Islamic precedence would replace clan affiliation and the *muhâjirûn* who settled there would be rewarded according to their status; as *Muhâjirûn*, *Anṣâr*, and other *Sahâba*, followed by those from *ahl al-ayyâm* (Yarmuk and Qâdisiyya principally), and finally the *rawâdif*, those who arrived after these battles and were graded according to their record: the basic unit of organization was the *'irâfa*, paid 100,000 dir-hams. In this way, according to Hinds, those concerned would defend their *sâbiqa* interest against the tribal *ashrâf* and reinforce the Madinan hegemony set up by the Prophet and maintained by Abû Bakr in face of (p.95) the serious *ridda* threat. It should be noted that this organization dis-advantaged many of the great Yemeni-Yaman tribes who had taken part in the *ridda* and were thus largely classified in the lowest category of *rawâdif*. It is difficult to know how far that played a part in Yamani resentment, but like 'Umar's reforming the fragmented tribes of Bâjila, Nakha', and Khath'am into important military groupings, it cut across the old order and is a factor that should be borne in mind when considering the history of the Yamanis in Kûfa.<sup>10</sup>

This organization of the *dîwân* started in 20/641, by which time the early-comers had already enjoyed a free run for five years or more of the Sawâd, the main cultivated area of Iraq allocated to their *miṣr*.<sup>11</sup> It was far from complete when 'Uthmân succeeded to the Caliphate on grounds of adhering to the existing order, that is, *sâbiqa* over tribal *sharaf*, but the pressure of newcomers increasingly put a strain on finances. Only one answer existed: new conquests under the terms of his policy statement of 29/649-50: to the conqueror the reward (*wa-ammal-futûḥ fa-li-awwal man wiliyaha*). And that automatically brought the tribal organization of the Muslim armies back into play. So a two-pronged drive towards Khurâsân was organized, with the Kûfans responsible for the northern front, by far and away the more difficult approach, and reinforcements sent to al-Ash'ath, already in the field since 28/648-9, now made responsible for Adharbayjan with an operational base at Ardabîl. Qazwîn was also reinforced while Sa'îd b. Qays al-Hamdâni, whose importance in mobilizing Hamdân had been recognized by 'Umar, was given charge of Rayy. In other words, the two great *sharîf* Yamani leaders of southern Arabia commanded the main campaigns. But operations ground to a standstill after a defeat at Balanjar (31/651-2). Sayf b. 'Umar sarcastically remarks of al-Ash'ath, what was to be expected of *ridda* leaders? Such appointments simply increased in them the corruption of earthly things.

Not so the expansion from Basra. Under the direction of Ibn 'Âmir ('Abdullâh b. 'Âmir), the Fârs campaign was immediately extended and his first action was to send Hâkim b. Jabala al-'Abdi to *thaghr al-hind*, that is, towards Makrân and Sind, although he returned saying there was nothing worth having there. With the conquest of Fârs completed, the Tawwaj *miṣr* was more or less wound up, the main Azd settled in Basra, and the campaigns moved on to Kirman, Seistan, and Khurâsân. According to 'Awtabi some Azd did remain behind, and it may well be they joined the final influx of Azd 'Umân in the 50s and early 60s (see below).

**(p.96)** So, the isolation of the eastern Arabian contingents from Oman and Bahrayn, which had marked the early phase of the Fârs campaign from Tawwaj, came to an end and the Omanis were increasingly drawn into the mainline politics of the Arabo-Islamic empire and themselves welded into an ever more complex military organization, yet one that remained essentially tribal, thus reinforcing their regional and supra-tribal identity, essentially as Azd. But well before the reorganization of Basra into *akhmâs*, the Azd in Basra were a major force to be reckoned with. And they were Omani Azd, not Azd Sarât, who were in Kûfa along with other western Azd groupings. Why there is misunderstanding over this point will be discussed in due course. Here we will simply note that by the time of the Camel the (Omani) Azd, under Huddâni and 'Ataki leadership, formed the largest single Basran group of those who actively participated in the battle, to judge by the relative figures of those killed.

'Uthmân's murder<sup>12</sup> and the Battle of the Camel<sup>13</sup>

Neither the Basrans nor Omanis were involved in events leading to the murder of the Caliph 'Uthmân, though the Sakûni and Tujîbi chiefs in Egypt certainly were, as too the Nakh' of Madhḥij in Kûfa, notably Mâlik b. al-Ashtar. The fundamental issue remained that of *sâbiqa*, the increasing fiscal control of central government, and the favouritism accorded to 'Uthmân's relatives, which resulted in a declining role of the Islamic elite and a rising power of the tribal aristocracy. There may have been some gripes, like the Caliph not allowing the bedouin to participate in the 'aṭa as a measure of economy, or the precedence given to selling state produce at the cost of the Gulf merchants (cf. Chapter 5), but basically the Omanis, like most of the rest of the Basrans, had profited from his regime. Only after becoming Ibâḍi did the issue of *barâ'a*, dissociating from 'Uthmân, really take on significance.

But although the actual confrontation and murder of the Caliph took place at Madina and the provincial opposition stemmed essentially from Egypt, the Basrans were rapidly drawn into Meccan politics thereafter. The details need not concern us, but the opposition to 'Ali came to centre on three figures after the withdrawal of the Egyptians, Ṭalḥa b. 'Ubaydallâh, 'Â'isha, and al-Zubayr b. al-'Awwâm, with the *Anṣâr* and *sâbiqa* elite from Iraq rallying around 'Ali, who had basically played a moderating role in 'Uthmân's time. 'Â'isha bt. Abi Bakr, the Prophet's **(p.97)** widow, hated 'Ali and was finally persuaded to make common cause with Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr, laying the blame on 'Ali for instigating 'Uthmân's murder and calling for his removal, after which there would be a *shûrâ* and one or other of the two rivals selected, albeit the 'Mother of the Muslims' was inclined towards Ṭalḥa.

So the rebels broke with 'Ali and withdrew to Mecca, supported by certain Umawis, including Marwân b. al-Ḥakam, but Mu'âwiya, in control of Syria, stood off to watch how matters developed. With stalemate ensuing in the Hijaz and with neither side capable of raising more

than a 1,000 or so supporters, the Meccan group moved to Basra to use Ibn 'Âmir's ability to mobilize support there, notably from Azd and Ḍabba, while 'Ali countered by moving to Kûfa, which remained precariously loyal. The Meccan group proceeded to make propaganda for their cause, with Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr claiming that they had been forced to pay homage to 'Ali, and 'Â'isha railing against 'Ali's soft attitude towards 'Uthmân's murderers. That, incidentally, was also to play a role when the Omanis accepted Ibâḏism, and the Prophet's widow is excused on the grounds that she subsequently made a *tawba* (repentance), conveniently to Jâbir b. Zayd and Abû Bilâl.<sup>14</sup> Now thoroughly divided, skirmishes broke out amongst the Basrans, with the leaders of 'Abd al-Qays and some Bakr b. Wâ'il resisting the newcomers; finally, an armistice was agreed and Ka'b b. Ṣûr, the Omani qadi, was sent to Madina to investigate. Now in control of Basra, 'Â'isha emerges as the dominant figure, and it was in the Ḥuddâni quarter that she took up residence. Ka'b on his return basically found for Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr, but did his best to prevent Ṣabra b. Shaymân committing the Azd, for fear of the terrible bloodshed that might ensue. Nevertheless, ṣabra became her most ferocious partisan, accusing Ka'b of still being affected by his peace-loving Christian morality! When once again fighting broke out and the rebels attacked the *bayt al-mâl*, the 'Abd al-Qays and Wâ'il (Rabî'a) groups withdrew to join 'Ali at Kûfa, although significantly enough Mâlik b. Misma' al-Shaybâni stayed with the rebels, a split in the ranks that became even more significant in the events of 64. Al-Aḥnaf b. Qays, although inclined towards the Meccans, showed the same wisdom he exhibited in the Basra confrontations a quarter of a century later, and managed to keep the B. Sa'd Tamîm neutral, withdrawing with them to the desert areas outside Basra; other Tamîmi groups came to 'Â'isha's support. But it was the Azd and Ḍabba who were her main supporters, and it was she who played the leading role in inciting tribal loyalties to her person as Mother of the Muslims. So the main Omani groups became committed on the side of the Meccans, as they were later for 'Abdullâh Ibn al-Zubayr and his brother Muṣ'ab, and (p.98) they implicitly considered 'Uthmân to have been unlawfully killed. However, we should note that some 300 or so Omani B. Nâjiyya (B. Sâma) under al-Khirrîṭ b. Râshid supported 'Ali and followed him to Kûfa (see Chapter 5).

For his part, 'Ali by no means had an easy passage at Kûfa, but after the governor who had tried to keep the *miṣr* neutral was deposed, he raised sufficient support to move on Basra. So there was a line-up in what was effectively a tribal civil war, Muḏar confronting Muḏar, Rabî'a Rabî'a, and Yaman Yaman, although the Kûfans seemed not to believe that their kinsmen would attack them. As the main protagonists were negotiating and a settlement was on the point of being reached, fighting suddenly broke out between the confronting armies and battle was joined. Who started it is not clear. But the results were as Ka'b had foreseen, a bloodbath, and he himself met his death when trying to hold a Qur'ân between the belligerents at 'Â'isha's request as the fighting centred ever more on the howda of her 'Camel', after Ṭalḥa was killed, shot in the back by Marwân, and al-Zubayr had made off. To the fore in her defence was the 'Ataki leader holding her camel's halter, killed by an Azdi from Kûfa, a Companion of the Prophet, who died with him, blaming 'Â'isha for the bloodshed.

The losses were huge, but victory went finally to 'Ali, who generously gave *amân* to the rebels, allowing them to keep their property and preventing the defeated from being killed or enslaved: later the Khawârij reproached him for sparing those whose blood was licit (evidence that the issue that was later to divide the Azâriqa and Ibâḏis was already manifest). 'Â'isha certainly expressed remorse, for her part, largely it seems because of the traumatic experience of the

---



fighting, but she showed few signs of a true repentance when Ibn al- Abbâs came on behalf of 'Ali to remonstrate with her, and finally she withdrew to Madina, where she dropped out of the political picture. Al-Zubayr's departure from the battle had probably been more to do with seeing the consequences of what he had helped stir up rather than cowardice, but as he passed al-Ahnaf's camp it was treated as a despicable act and he was killed by a Mujâshi'i. His son ʔAbdullâh, however, had continued to fight bravely and was carried off the battlefield as though dead; but he recovered and made off for the Hijaz. That now left only Mu'âwiya for 'Ali to deal with.

The rest of 'Ali's Caliphate, along with Şifîn and its aftermath, will be dealt with in the next chapter, treating the story of Khawârij and Ibâdi beginnings, and here I concentrate on the fortunes of the Omanis under the early Umayyads. Before doing so however, we should note that Mu'âwiya b. Abi Sufyân's ruthless approach to establishing position, even before his full accession to power (41–60/661–80), was to play a role **(p.99)** in preparing the way for the eventual establishment of the first Ibâdi Imamate in south-western Arabia. The vicious campaign<sup>15</sup> led on his behalf against those suspected of being 'Ali's supporters by Busr b. Abi 'Arţâh in Yemen and Hadramawt, after he had dealt with Mecca and Madina, notably against Hamdân, in which he reputedly killed 30,000 and planned to kill a quarter of the population of Hadramawt, certainly goes a long way to explaining why the area became fertile ground for an anti-Umayyad uprising.

#### The Sufyanids

But in Iraq the situation was rather different. Mu'âwiya's position depended on a full return to dependence on the tribal *ashrâf*, and this continued to remain the case until Hajjaj's time. It was entirely to the benefit of the Azd, whose fortunes were initially made under the powerful governorship of Ziyâd b. Abîhi.

Ziyâd knew his Basra, from the time of the conquest of Obollah, and had been *locum tenens* for Abû Mûsâ al-Ash'ari whom 'Umar appointed as governor in 17/638 and who organized the Khuzistan campaign. It was Abû Mûsâ (dismissed by 'Uthmân from Basra in 29) who was 'Ali's arbiter at Şifîn, though he would have preferred his cousin Ibn 'Abbâs, whom he had appointed governor of Basra after the Battle of the Camel. Ziyâd became his tax-collector, but when 'Ali moved against Mu'âwiya, Ibn 'Abbâs joined him and left Ziyâd in charge at Basra. After Şifîn, Ziyâd was sent to take charge of Fârs and was there when 'Ali was murdered. The reconciliation with Mu'âwiya by the device of being recognized as his bastard half-brother made his fortune, and he and his son 'Ubaydallâh governed Basra more or less continuously, along with its Persian dependencies and Kûfa, between 45 and 64. The problem facing Ziyâd remained the same that had come to the fore in 'Uthmân's time, too many people for too few resources. He solved the problem by purging the *dîwân* lists in Kûfa and Basra, appropriating the *şawâfi* hitherto considered as the right of the first conquerors, reduced the tribal groups in Kûfa from sevenths (*asbâ'*) to fourths (*arbâ'*), and fused those in Basra into fifth (*akhmâs*) for the purpose of controlling military service and to facilitate distribution from the *dîwân*. In this the Azd were allocated their own *khums*, thereby giving them the leadership over numerous other clans; likewise the other early settlers, Tamîm, Bakr b. Wâ'il, and 'Abd al-Qays. The fifth *khums* was made up of *ahl al-'Aliya*, 'Westerners', or rather 'Northern Arabs' of Muḍar (Quraysh, Kinâna, Bâjila, Qays 'Aylan, etc.), but it also included the Omani B. Nâjiyya who claimed **(p.100)** Sâma

---

b. Lu'ay descent, as too certain elements of Azd from the Hijaz. Some 25,000 men and their families from each *musr* were transferred to Khurâsân, thereby consolidating the Arab control of the province, but also transposing there the same tribal structures and quarrels. Those figures incidentally also show that the transfer was equal from both Kûfa and Basra, though there has always been an assumption that Basrans predominated, probably because they came under the nominal control of the governor of Basra and because Tamîm had played an essential role in the early conquests.

However, there was one fundamental difference between Iraq and Persia: there were no *amşâr*.<sup>16</sup> The Arabs were dispersed between the towns and villages, and while notionally dependent on Basra, the provincial governors were in reality quasi-independent. For this reason it was the Ziyâd b. Abîhi family who retained overall control in the early days, first indirectly through Ziyâd's appointments, then directly through members of his own family. 'Ubaydallâh, when himself only about 25, was appointed to Khurâsân for a year or two before taking over Basra around 55/675-6, bringing with him 2,000 Bukhârâns, famed for their archery skills, who effectively became his own *corps d'élite*. His brother 'Abbâd was given Seistan, and then another brother, 'Abd al-Ramân, Khurâsân. Three other brother also received provincial appointments, 'Uthmân, Yazîd, and Salm, the last ending up in overall control of Seistan and Khurâsân where he got on very well with al-Muhallab, making profitable business together.<sup>17</sup>

Up to Ziyâd's time Basra had grown in a pretty haphazard way, tribal fighting was endemic, and public safety precarious. Ziyâd's first task was to tackle the problem of security, and he ruthlessly stamped out the worst excesses of tribalism and firmly dealt with the bands of robbers masquerading under the Khawârij banner, to the approval of the moderates like Abû Bilâl who had little sympathy for the excesses carried out in the name of the martyrs of Nahrawân. Certainly the Azd profited from his subsequent reorganization of the town into *akhmâs*, and to some extent they had already won favour with Ziyâd when, in charge of Basra in the troubled times at the end of 'Ali's Caliphate, he had taken refuge with them as 'Abdullâh b. 'Amr al-Ḥaḍrami tried to bring the city over to Mu'âwiya. 'Abdullâh had been instructed to stay with Muḍar, to keep away from Rabî a and solicit Azd, but when he approached them, Şabra b. Shaymân al-Ḥuddâni took it as a slight that he had stayed with Tamîm. So when Ziyâd, after a dubious response from the Rabî a chiefs, approached the Azdi leader, he willingly offered him refuge and to protect **(p.101)** the public treasury.<sup>18</sup> Yet to judge by remarks made when his son did likewise in 64, the Azd had not reaped any particular reward, except perhaps Nâfi' b. Khâlid al-Ṭâḥi's appointment as tax-collector to one of the quarters into which Ziyâd divided Khurâsân. The Ṭâḥiyya were an 'Imrân Azd clan present in Oman, but seem to have formed rather an independent group in Basra at the time Ziyâd took control. Nevertheless, when Nâfi' was imprisoned because of a slander, the Azd showed their solidarity, and their leaders, who included Sayf b. Wahb al-Ma'wali, interceded, reminding Ziyâd of his debt for Şabra having given him refuge.<sup>19</sup> Sayf, incidentally, is described as one of the most generous and noble of the Azd, whereas Şabra was celebrated for his bravery and leadership. Both were Shanu'a Azd from Oman.

#### Azd 'Umân influx

We now come to the passage that seems to have confused so many scholars about the arrival of the Azd in Basra and has led to some consequent important distortions in wider history, the idea

---

that the Omani Azd arrived after 59/678–9. For example, Sharon<sup>20</sup> considers that until the advent of the Azd under al-Muhallab the Arab population of Khurâsân consisted of four main tribal groups, namely Tamîm and Qays who combined to form a Muḍar block of the 'Northern' tribes, and Bakr b. Wâ'il with 'Abd al-Qays forming Rabî'a. When the Azd reached Khurâsân with al-Muhallab, they brought with them the treaty that had been agreed or renewed in Basra between the Azd and Rabî'a (see below), thereby upsetting this balance. If that were so, why did Ziyâd give the Azd a *khums* in Basra, and why is it assumed that its members were not similarly transferred to Khurâsân? True, al-Muhallab may have brought further Azd with him, recruited from the influx that arrived around 59, but the essential feature that affected the old balance in Khurâsân was not so much his tribesmen but his own appointment as governor after his victory over the Azâriqa.

It certainly is true that the Azd were the last major group to come to Basra, basically between 29/649–50, when Basra took over the Fârs campaign, and when Tawwaj finally wound up. That is why both Madâ'ini (d. 228/843) and Abû 'Ubayda (Ma'mar b. al-Muthannâ) tell us that they were the last to arrive after Basra's founding, and it was for this reason that the *Asâwira* had been obliged to join the Tamîm and not the Azd, whom they preferred. The reason they wanted to do so is obvious. Ignoring the story that the Persian military elite wished to ally with the tribe **(p.102)** closest to the Prophet, they wanted to join a tribe whom they knew well from dealings in Oman, Bahrayn, and on the Persian coast, rather than one that was only marginally associated with the Persian empire.<sup>21</sup> But when we examine the names of the Azd leaders in Basra mentioned before or around the time the Azd *khums* was organized in 45/665, we see nothing but Omani *nisbas*, from Ḥuddân, 'Atîk, Ma'âwil, Yaḥmad, Jahâdim, Ṭâḥiyya. Furthermore, we know that the Azd who came from Tawwaj were Omani, plus some Azd Bahrayn. So why have distinguished scholars like Caskel come to the conclusion that the Omanis were latecomers, arriving around 59? There are two reasons. The first is the distinction made by the sources between Azd 'Umân and Azd Shanu'a. They assume that the Shanu'a were from Sarât or western Arabia, as presumably also the 'Imrân, most of whose most celebrated clans came from the west. So for them, all these early Azd who formed the *khums* were from western Arabia (which, even if it were so, would not obviate a proportion of them being transferred to Khurâsân). Our study of the Omani sources, on the contrary, shows all the above shaikhs were from Oman, as too was al-Muhallab's father, Abû Şufra, whose name keeps bobbing up. What we might note, however, is that there is only one family of Mâlik b. Fahm mentioned, the Jahâdim, who were by no means the dominant clan of this major Azd grouping. No Hinâ (until much later<sup>22</sup>), the acknowledged leaders of the confederation, no Salîma, no Farâhîd; indeed, none of the names one would expect. Nor, as we have seen, were there any Julandâ. In fact, all these early Omani tribal leaders in Basra came from the core region of central Oman, including the Jahâdim, who were from Samad (al-Sha'n). It was this geopolitical distinction which was the feature that distinguished the early Omani migrants to Basra from the later-comers who came from the peripheries of the region.

The second reason is an uncritical acceptance of an admittedly difficult passage deriving from Abû 'Ubayda that occurs in Ṭabari<sup>23</sup> (but not Balâdhuri) concerning the events of 64–5. It is an aside to describe some of the background to the Azd putsch under the Ma'ni shaikh and their alliance with part of Bakr b. Wâ'il. It appears to read that Muḍar originally outnumbered Rabî'a

and that the group of Azd (*jamâ'at al-Azd*) were the last to settle there. True, the Azd from Tawwaj came in or shortly after 29. By that time Rabî'a consisted of the original Bakr b. Wâ'il and 'Abd al-Qays from Bahrayn and the lower Gulf. Thus far no particular problem, except what exactly is meant by *jamâ'at al-Azd*. The meaning (**p.103**) of the next sentence is dubious, but the English translators have followed the more logical reading, which more or less states that when 'Umar transferred to the new *miṣr* those Muslims who had become settled (i.e. who had been sedentary or who had subsequently abandoned a bedu way of life), the *jamâ'at al-Azd* remained where they were and only came at the end of the Caliphate of Mu'âwiya and the beginning of Yazîd's reign (whence the date 59).<sup>24</sup> Since we know that there was a considerable contingent of Omani Azd by 45 and that they came from the settled core of Oman, and since the implication in the Ṭabari account was that those who remained outside were non-settled, then it would seem that what we are dealing with is an influx of bedu Azd, and they would have been predominantly Mâlik b. Fahm from the Oman desert fringes. In this connection too, the passage in the Ibâḍi sources discussed in Chapter 1, whereby 'Uthmân would not include the bedu in the *dîwân*, should be borne in mind. If correct, that too would explain why some stayed in the Tawwaj area and, along with this influx of the true bedu groupings, came late. The only problem in following this interpretation remains the phrase *jamâ'at al-Azd*: if that could be read to imply part of Azd or a group of Azd, than that problem disappears. But whatever the reading, the fact is that there were Azd, and Omani Azd at that, in Basra well before the new influx, enough to have a *khums* to themselves; the western Azd, in so far as they were there, belonged to the 'Âliyât *khums*. The reason the newcomers came is quite clear. The Azd and Basra were doing very well and there were rich pickings. So 'Ubaydallâh boasted that when he took over the *dîwân* it had doubled from 40,000 *muqâtila* to 80,000 and their dependents (*a'yâl*) from 70,000 to 120,000 (the Ṭabari version has 80,000 to 90,000 and 90,000 to 140,000 respectively<sup>25</sup>).

So, with the arrival of this new wave the Tamîm suggested that al-Aḥnaf approach them before Rabî'a got there, but he responded that if it was the Azd who made approach all well and good, but if the Tamîmis did so they would become the back end rather than the front of such an alliance. So it was Mâlik b. Misma' (erstwhile leader of the Bakr b. Wâ'il, who had already shown his independence when the Meccans arrived in 'Ali's time and saw a chance to regain his position), who approached the chief of the Azd, who at that time was Mas'ûd b. 'Amr al-Ma'ni, to renew the old pre-Islamic pact. They agreed on condition that Mas'ûd led the alliance.

Who, then, was this chief who had appeared on the Azd scene? All (**p.104**) sources, except one minor one, agree that he was a Ma'ni,<sup>26</sup> that is, the Ma'n of Mâlik b. Fahm. And the Ma'n, as we have seen, were opponents of the Mâlik b. Fahm establishment and associated very much with the bedu fringe in southern Oman and Dhofar. With the exception of a dubious mention of a Mas'ûd in Sayf b. 'Umar's account of the Battle of the Camel (with no ascendancy or *nisba*, and which is clearly a Sayf intercalation of a name he knows to lead the third component in the Omani Azd trilogy, but who in no way features in events), Mas'ûd's name first features in Ṭabari in the year 60, that is, shortly after the influx described by Abû 'Ubayda, when, according to Ibn al-Kalbi, Ḥusayn b. 'Ali wrote to the heads of the *akhmâs*. If the list of names given is valid, Mas'ûd was already apparently considered as the Azd leader.<sup>27</sup> Other than that, we know little about him except for the circumstances of his death in 64, apparently aged 80 (difficult to believe, if he was still being hailed as al-Qamr because of his good looks), and that he was

---

related to al-Muhallab on his mother's side (like everyone else).<sup>28</sup> However, there is a very strong implication that he was the leader of the newcomers. The main Azd leadership, after the old Ḥuddâni, Ṣabra, had died seems to have passed to the 'Atîk family which had played such a prominent role in the Battle of the Camel, and it was the son of this Camel leader to whom the Azd turned after the Tamîm killed Mas'ûd and who finally reached an understanding with al-Ahnaf b. Qays. And it is significant that when 'Ubaydallâh b. Ziyâd approached the new Azd chief in circumstances to be described, it was through the intermediary of the shaikh of the Jahâdim, that is, the head of the original Mâlik b. Fahm Azd settlers who had given his father refuge a quarter of a century before.

#### The year 64 AH<sup>29</sup>

The actual events of 64-5, which marked a turning-point for the Azd and Basran politics, arose from the death of Yazîd b. Mu'âwiya and the succession uncertainty in Damascus. Until matters were settled, 'Ubaydallâh (**p.105**) tried to get the Basrans to recognize him provisionally, pointing out all the prosperity he had brought. Initially they agreed, but then began to regret their decision, particularly since the people of Kûfa absolutely refused to do likewise, and they were further disturbed when a messenger arrived from Ibn Zubayr calling on them to recognize him. It will be remembered that at the Battle of the Camel the Basrans were generally favourable to Ṭalḥa, al-Zubayr, and 'Â'isha. The result is that they now appointed two mediators, one from Muḍar, the other from Râsib, to select a provisional governor, and the choice finally fell on a Hâshimi, 'Abdullâh b. al-Ḥârith, known as Babba. He in turn appointed a Sadûsi as chief of police. In the meantime, after trying to win support by using the treasury money, with some success amongst the Bakr b. Wâ'il, 'Ubaydallâh personally appropriated the funds and made for the leader of the Jahâdim who had given refuge to his father. He and his party, which included a representative of the Ḥuddân, were fired on by the B. Nâjiyya and driven off by the Ṭâḥis when passing through their quarters at night, but eventually they reached Mas'ûd. He was far from enthusiastic about his new guest. But once again 'Ubaydallâh used his money to good effect, perhaps after being reminded that his father had not shown any particular gratitude to the tribe when they had earlier given him refuge. And there he stayed with the Ma'ni Azd leader, for three months.

In the meantime news from Herat arrived that the Rabî'a had been attacked by Tamîm on behalf of the pro-Zubayrid governor, and a squabble broke out with a member of the former Basran governor's family, the Qurashi Ibn 'Âmir; and in the ensuing skirmish the Bakr b. Wâ'il present were routed. Some time after, an insult traded over this fracas led to a Yashkuri being killed by a Ḍabbi and the old Muḍar-Rabî'a rivalry burst into flames. And with it came political alignments dating back to pre-Islamic times among the Bakr b. Wâ'il and the issue of the leadership of their confederation in Basra. Mâlik b. Misma', the previous head of the *khums*, who had been displaced officially by the Caliph Yazîd b. Mu'âwiya in favour of Ashyam b. Shaqîq al-Sadûsi, now saw the chance to regain his position and, encouraged by 'Ubaydallâh, approached the Azd to renew their old pre-Islamic alliance (which *inter alia* included Kinda and Ṭayy), recognizing Mas'ûd as the overall leader of this new bloc. With 'Ubaydallâh staying judiciously in the background, Mas'ûd now attempted a putsch, nominally for 'Ubaydallâh, but basically on his own behalf. There is some confusion in the accounts. One story goes as far as to say that Ubaydallâh had already departed for Shâm, leaving Mas'ûd in charge. Others that he incited the Azd to action, but declined actually to accompany Mas'ûd to the Friday mosque.

Indeed, many of the people thought it was he and not the Azdi leader who had been killed there. In any case it was Mas'ûd who made the running. Ibn al-Kalbi says **(p.106)** he was already in possession of the *qaṣr* when he mounted the *minbar* and started swearing in supporters. Abû 'Ubayda Ma mar, whose account is probably the most reliable, says that the Azd would not be content until they held the power (*ra'is*) and filled the Mirbad with their spearmen. With no action being taken by the ineffectual Babba in the government house (*dâr al-imâra*), Mâlik b. Misma' on his side moved to take revenge on one of the Tamîmi groups involved in the death of the Yashkuri, but whilst on the rampage news came that Mas'ûd had been killed. For a while al-Aḥnaf b. Qays, the overall leader (*sayyid*) of the Tamîm confederation, had managed to keep the more impetuous youngsters in rein, but finally gave way to pressure and authorized an attack on the allied forces surrounding the mosque where Mas'ûd was inciting his followers from the *minbar*. Rallied by the 400 Asâwira of their confederation (who used the five-arrow *fanjaqân* burst to fire two volleys), the Tamîmis broke into the mosque, killing Mas'ûd and routing his followers. Thereupon 'Ubaydallâh made off for Syria with an escort of a hundred Azd.

The above account is almost certainly exaggerated in its impression of the numbers involved, while the course of ensuing events is also far from clear. Indeed, one account makes out that the Azd believed at first it was the work of a Khârîji band and that Mas'ûd was killed by an *ilj fârisi* along with a dozen companions. It was only after they had exacted revenge that they discovered it was the Tamîm who had incited them.<sup>30</sup> One common dimension in all accounts, however, is that it was the Persian allies of the Tamîm who had been the main protagonists against Mas'ûd. Other elements in the accounts are less easy to reconcile. A pity there was no Sayf b. 'Umar to do so; but Abû 'Ubayda Ma mar does his best! Just as numbers have grown with hindsight, so has the scale of events. It will be noted that up to now neither the 'Abd al-Qays nor al-'Âlâya, predominantly Muḍar, had been involved and those engaged were confined to Tamîm (and even then, mostly their Persian followers), some Bakr b. Wâ'il, and probably only part of the Azd. But now, according to Abû 'Ubayda (*apud* Balâdhuri), the whole town was under arms and battle formations drawn up, with the Azd under their old leader, Ziyâd b. 'Amr al-'Ataki in the centre, and their 'Abd al-Qays allies with their dependants from Hajar (al-Baḥrayn) forming the left flank, and the Bakr b. Wâ'il and their dependants from 'Anaza and al-Namir (Azd Sarât group?) under Mâlik b. Misma' the right. Facing them were the so-called Muḍar groupings, under the overall command of the Riyâḥi who had been with the Asâwira that killed Mas'ûd. A Ḍabbi commanded one group consisting of a B. Sa'd contingent and their Persian dependants **(p.107)** (Asâwira and Andighân), 'Adawiyya, 'Abd Manât, and Ḍabba; another Sa'd group and their dependants under command of a member of their shaikhly group the Sârim formed the second; and the third group consisting of B. 'Amr b. Tamîm, B. Ḥaṇẓala b. Mâlik, and their Arab dependants the B. al-Amm and their Persian dependants the Zuṭṭ and Siyâbija. Again, probably a rationalization of the line-up.

Ṭabari is content simply to say there was *fitna* in Basra, but two mediators, the new governor appointed by Ibn Zubayr and Babba, persuaded the Azd to accept ten times the blood money for Mas'ûd. That is a pretty reductionist account, and probably due to Abû 'Ubayda's prejudice against the idea that tribal groups could ever organize a peaceful outcome to a confrontation on their own. Certainly the Quraysh were in a position to mediate, but it is clear that it was al-Aḥnaf's cool head that prevented a bloodbath. It was his offer of *diyya* (blood-wite) and his

appeasing words that the Azd in Basra were more precious to the Tamîm than their own brothers in Kûfa, coupled to the sensible approach of the former Azdi leader, Ziyâd b. 'Amr b. al-Ashrâf al-'Ataki to accept *diyya*, that saved the day. And it is to be noted that when al-Muhallab came back to Basra he was furious with the irresponsibility that had been shown, and did not hesitate to say so, even though making himself unpopular with some of his fellow tribesmen.<sup>31</sup> Thus, a sort of peace was restored and Basra seemingly took a step forward, with common interests prevailing over tribal mores. But it was superficial, and the rancour engendered by the Azd in these and other events was never forgotten: in due course their enemies were able to avenge their humiliation and drive the Azd and Omanis not only from power in Basra and Khurâsân, but also effectively exclude them from any position in the central Islamic state.

#### Başra al-Muhallab

The end of these three months of tribal turbulence in Basra itself did not, however, mark an end to other threats to the *mīsr*, and even during them we see lurking in the background the presence of Khawârij bands, both within and without the city. To find a new governor to replace the ineffectual Babba, who failed to deal with the state of tension and disorder, worsened by an outbreak of plague (*al-jarîf*), it was to Ibn Zubayr that the Basrans had turned. By the time the new governor arrived, a Basran expedition sent to fight the Azâriqa had been soundly trounced and the Khawârij were advancing on Basra. It was in this crisis that the *deus ex machina* arrived in the form of al-Muhallab b. Abi Şufra on his way back from Madina.

**(p.108)** Up to now we have not made account of the Khawârij movement, since it has been reserved for the next chapter. Suffice it to say here that Ziyâd and 'Ubaydallâh had dealt ruthlessly with the numerous bands who, under the banner of Khârijism, were terrorizing and plundering the countryside. Immediately after the Caliph Yazîd's death 'Ubaydallâh, for causes unknown, had either released the Khawârij in prison or else they had broken out and had based themselves in the quarters of the Persian population, where the Asâwira and other Persian Tamîmi dependants lived. These Khawârij were the only Basrans actually to go and see Ibn Zubayr, but decided to reject him since he would not accept their renouncement of 'Uthmân, although there was some dissent expressed over this decision.<sup>32</sup> Within the city, the leaders of the Khârij bands were for the most part reasonably moderate, as witness the fact that they were accepted, perhaps even welcomed, by their hosts. But the real threat came from Nâfi' b. al-Azraq, the leader of the most extreme elements, who with his followers, initially said to number 350,<sup>33</sup> set up a secessionist state based on al-Ahwâz, welcomed by the local Persian population and other exploited groups for whom Khârij ideology promised an amelioration of their status and the crippling taxation imposed by the existing regime.

It was the extremist dogma which Nâfi' formulated that actually led to the first real splits in Khawârij doctrine. His thesis was simple. All who did not rise to join him were *mushrikûn*, and by living under any other regime were *ipso facto* subject to the treatment meted out to polytheists. The principle of political murder (*isti'râḍ*), examination of would-be members of the community (*imtiḥân al-muhâjirîn*), the treatment of those quietists (*qa'ada*) who failed to join him which made it permissible (*ḥalâl*) to kill, plunder, and enslave them, all followed from this central thesis. It was too extreme for some of his followers, and he was deserted by a group under the leadership of Najda b. 'Ârnir al-Ḥanafî who set up a Khârijî state in Yam âma, from where he gained control of Bahrayn and, as we have seen, for a short while also Oman. Even in

this split one might suspect that it was tribal rather than ideological differences that led to the separation.

Despite their quarrels, the majority of Basrans under threat from the bands of Azâriqa, and with no hope of outside assistance, united to resist them. A ferocious battle was fought at Dûlâb in which Nâfi' himself was killed; in this battle the Azd contingent was reputedly commanded by al-Muhallab's brother, Qabîsa b. Abi Şufra.<sup>34</sup> But under their new leader Ibn Mâhûn ('Ubaydallâh b. Bushayr b. Mâhûn or Mâhûz) the Azâriqa relentlessly pushed the Basrans back into the town. With Azâriqa forces on the outskirts of the city and controlling its bridges, the situation was **(p.109)** desperate and many fled to the desert.<sup>35</sup> A strong leader was needed, but opinion was divided on whom it should be. Al-Aḥnaf had no doubts: al-Muhallab b. Abi Şufra. And he got his way and placed his own Tamîm under al-Muhallab's command.

Ṭabari has an interesting variant of the story based on Ibn al-Kalbi to explain al-Muhallab's absence from Basra in the preceding events. The last we had seen of him was enjoying the benefits of his relations with 'Ubaydallâh's brother, Salm, in Khurâsân. However, after Yazîd's death he must have wasted no time in turning to Ibn Zubayr, who apparently invested him with the governorship of that province.<sup>36</sup> As soon as he arrived from Madina, al-Aḥnaf, along with the new governor and the leading Basrans, pleaded with him to take command against the Azâriqa, but he refused, much more concerned with getting to Persia to reap the benefits of his new appointment. So, this account goes on, the Basrans faked a letter from Ibn Zubayr instructing him to take command of operations against the Azâriqa and promising him even greater reward than if he had gone to Khurâsân. He finally agreed, on condition that he was entirely free to run the campaign how and with whom he saw fit, and that each of the *akhmâs* would send contingents to his force: all agreed except Mâlik b. Misma' (perhaps because of his criticism of the attempted putsch). So al-Muhallab, with his army from the five *akhmâs*, gradually pushed the Azâriqa back, until finally there was a major battle, or rather series of battles, at a place called Sillâ wa Sillabray which swung this way and that for some three days, during which Ibn Mâhûn was killed.

Although there is a certain sense to this account, it represents a compression of events. Initially it is fairly clear that it was Azd who formed the backbone of al-Muhallab's force, for in an early confrontation with the Azâriqa it is stated that he had 12,000 men of his tribe with him and only seventy others. That is certainly an exaggeration or an error in numbers, for in the great battle itself the figure of 3,000 Azd 'Urnân<sup>37</sup> is mentioned as rallying to him at a crucial moment and this sort of scale is confirmed by the reported number of Khawârij deaths as 7,000 and those who thereafter left Ahwâz and the Basra environs as 3,000. But this reference to the core of his followers being Azd 'Umân is, however, interesting for it indicates that it was those newcomers who had largely followed Mas'ûd al-Ma'ni, plus the more adventurous youth of the older established Azd, like the hero Abû 'Alqama al-Yahmadi (he was rewarded with 100,000 dirhams for his bravery in the battle), who made up his principle **(p.110)** followers. But after this success and the agreement that he would govern all the territory he conquered and the stipends of his followers paid (although the actual *kharâj* was deemed to belong the Muslim state),<sup>38</sup> the tribesmen quickly rallied to him and his army swelled to 30,000. Although Basra and Ahwâz were now cleared of the Khârijî threat, the war was by no means over and the fighting remained vicious; during the course of it, al-Muhallab's brother Mu'ârik was crucified by a gang of



Azâriqa led by a former *mawlâ* of his father. It was to be another ten years before he finally smashed the Azâriqa under their formidable leader Qaṭari b. Fujâ'a and once again it is clear from the sources that by far and away the main part of his troops were made up of Omanis, while his generals, as later those of his son Yazîd's, were from his own family and other Azd.<sup>39</sup>

It was this success and the removal of the Khâriji threat to more distant lands that marked the turning point in Azd fortunes and the Muhallabid family. Basra became known as 'Baṣra al-Muhallab' and the Kûfans called the Basrans '*mawâli* al-Muhallab'. Even Hajjaj had to admit the debt: 'O people of Iraq, you are the slaves of al-Muhallab.'<sup>40</sup>

So who exactly was this new Azd leader? It was his father, Abû Şufra Zâlim b. Şarrâq (variant Şarrâf) or alternatively Şârif b. Zâlim, who is said to have established the family reputation. Leaving aside the attachment of 'Atîk to his name and his supposed connection with early events in Omani history to ennoble his origins, he may, nevertheless, first have come to the fore in the Fârs campaign. At the outset of this campaign, one story goes, it was suggested to Ibn Abi'l- 'Âş to seek his advice, but when the commander found he was still using his pre-Islamic name, Zâlim b. Şarrâq, he refused to consult with him. That may not be total nonsense. His enemies say he was a Persian from the island of Kharak, where he was a weaver whose real name was Beshkharé, and this was Arabized when he crossed over to Oman and entered as a sayce (groom) in the service of 'Uthmân b. Abi'l- 'Âş al-Thaqafi with whom he went to Basra. When the Azd transferred there he joined them and distinguished himself in their fighting and assimilated into their tribal groupings, along with many others. So, rather than as the leader of the 'Imrân Azd contingent who brought a hundred mares and a hundred red she-camels with him, he more likely started as a simple stable-lad looking after the animals in the first campaigns in south-west Persia. His name, however, might well have been suggested to Ibn Abi'l- 'Âş as someone who knew the Persian coast, and it makes perfectly good sense that he early on won recognition fighting in the 'Imrân contingent under 'Atîk command in Fârs. Hence, in due **(p. 111)** course his assimilation into that particular grouping. Certainly he was not the 'Atîki shaikh. At the Battle of the Camel that was Ziyâd b. 'Amr, while earlier, when the Persians were evicted from Oman, it was Nu'am b. al-Ĥârith, according to Ibn Durayd. Significantly that Omani author says nothing about Abû Şufra's antecedents. Various versions in other Omani sources say his mother was from the Hudayd 'Abd al-Qays while al-Muhallab's own mother was from a choice of Ĥuddân, 'Abd al-Qays and 'Amr b. Bakra.<sup>41</sup>

In any case, Abû Şufra was conveniently absent from the Basran scene in the Omani account of his history, and, along with the young al-Muhallab, took part in Ibn Samûra's campaign in Seistan during the early 30s/650s. When al-Muhallab did arrive just after the Battle of the Camel, he was furious at the role the Azd had played and told 'Ali that had he been there it would never have happened. This seems to have resulted in 'Ali giving him a minor governorship in Ahwâz shortly before he died.<sup>42</sup> Whatever the truth about Abû Şufra, it was al-Muhallab who acquired the family *sharaf* and it was on the Khurâsân front opened by Ziyâd b. Abihi that he really made his name. It is of some passing interest to note that one of his close companions there was to become the redoubtable leader of the Azâriqa, Qaṭari b. Fujâ'a al-Mâzini. But just as his father never really impinged on Basran history, neither did his son until after the events of 64 with his campaigns against the Azâriqa. From now on the Azd's fortunes were intimately linked with those of the Muhallabid family. As Crone has shown, it was as one of

---

the great generals whose power was linked with the governorship of vast territories, disposing of wealth and subordinate posts to their followers, that Azd fortunes were now to be made and unmade. Despite having been a supporter of Ibn Zubayr and Muṣ'ab (effectively independent in Iraq on behalf of his brother), al-Muhallab was indispensable and in 78/697-8 he was appointed governor of Khurâsân and was succeeded by his son Yazîd, after his father died in 82/702. Both remained loyal to Hajjaj and did not join Ibn al-Ash'ath's revolt.

And it must be admitted that, so long as they were on the winning side, the Muhallabids and their followers ensured that the privileged position of the Arab elite was not undermined by distributing wealth to the *mawâli* or alleviating the taxation of the subject peasantry. So it can be seen that the role of the Omanis in the story of Iraq and Persia was now being made not by the tribesmen themselves, but by one family. And the higher they rose, the further they could fall. Their story consequently comes (p.112) within the field of *histoire événementielle*, and may be briefly told, as it is pretty familiar and any deep analysis requires ranging far beyond our field of interest and an expertise in the period that I do not have. Nevertheless, to understand how and why fortunes could swing so wildly and rapidly we do need to ask some pertinent questions, the answer to which may help provide some relevant background to the development of Ibâḍism in Oman.

#### A supra-tribal state?

Such instability of office in the early Islamic period would be comprehensible had it resulted from the whim of an absolutist monarchy controlling a centralized bureaucracy and a standing army. It is patently obvious that this was not so, *a fortiori* in the eastern empire. Central authority was *ab initio* defied and the history of the period is one of almost continuous *fitan*. Abû Bakr had to deal with the *ridḍa* wars, 'Urnar was assassinated, 'Uthmân and 'Ali faced civil war, the Umayyads were challenged by Ibn Zubayr. The Khawârij formed a serious threat to the established order, as too did Mukhtâr's revolt, followed by that of al-Ash'ath, Yazîd b. al-Muhallab, and Qutayba b. Muslim. Yet none of these major uprisings eroded the empire. No great provinces were lost; events happened, personalities came and went, and all carried on, more or less as before.

So was Islam itself the binding force? The Caliphate was obviously not a theocracy; the only acknowledgement of the Caliph's central authority was in the *khuṭba*, which was nothing much more than starting proceedings with the national anthem. After the *ridḍa*, *zakât* was not at issue nor does remittance of *ghanîma* and *kharâj* to Madina appear to have been contested. The great annual migration of the Hajj which brought together members of the *umma* from all over the Islamic world was the only communal public manifestation of the duties of the Islam community. It was also, as we shall have cause to see, an occasion for plotting uprising against the central authority, but it was a duty that no Caliph or governor could, or ever really tried to, prevent. It is interesting that Ṭabari concludes his survey of each year's events with two things: the list of the leading governors and the leader of the Hajj. But other than the obligations of the pillars of Islam and a table of commandments of dos and don'ts, the institutional basis of Islam was primitive. True, there was now a *Kitâb Allâh* (although even that was to be revised by Hajjaj), but *sunnat nabîyhi* meant more or less whatever the user of the term wanted, and was essentially a periphrasis for rejecting governmental authority. It certainly did not equate with the custom as

reported in *ḥadīth* attributed to the Prophet; that science was still in its infancy even in the late Umayyad (p.113) period.<sup>43</sup> So there was no *sharī'a*, and the legal code and its institutions were still more or less unstructured.

So what else held the state together? The administration was primitive and largely in the hands of the *mawālī* and the records in Iraq kept in Persian, while the army was a 'citizen' army made up of the *muqātila*. True, it was in the interest of this Islamic elite to maintain the mode of production it had inherited in the conquered lands, but the continuous internal strife within the community was hardly compatible with that need. Was patronage the key? It certainly played a role. Leadership of the state had been appropriated by Quraysh. The person of the Prophet himself aside, there was nothing that made Quraysh nobler than any other Arab clan, despite the sort of *afāḍil* that the likes of al-Jāḥiẓ were later to disseminate. Nevertheless, there was a general acquiescence that Quraysh had achieved a sort of supra-tribal *sayyid* status, and it was natural that, following the death of the Prophet, his successor should be from someone close, from the *ahl al-bayt*. For the Shi'a that meant the descent of 'Ali, but for the rest of the Muslims the claims of members of the extended family or clan as exemplified by the Umayyads and the anti-Caliph Ibn Zubayr were based far more on *Realpolitik* than charisma. In the event, Umayyad authority was more or less imposed by force and accepted perforce, save by the Khawārij, who recognized no precedence in the 'Imamate' after Siffin.

But what was that force? Certainly the Umayyads had a power-base in Syria, but that does not explain how the likes of Ziyād and his sons could exercise the sort of ruthless authority they exhibited in Iraq and Persia. One of the characteristics of the early Islamic state was that all major appointments were held by a tight little band who benefited from the early association of their families with the initial development of the Islamic state in its homeland. Today one might almost describe them as a Hijazi mafia! You either belonged to that 'family' or you didn't. Which is one of the reasons that Mu'āwiya granted Ziyād *istihāq* to his own immediate family. Even if you were leader of one of the great tribes like Tamīm, which had belonged to the old so-called Meccan *ilāf*, you still did not get a major government post. Your role was that of the *ashrāf*, 'the link between governor and governed in the Sufyānid system of indirect rule', as Crone puts it.<sup>44</sup> It was thus through a sort of patronage system that the benefits of the *dīwān* and the opportunities to conquer new territories filtered down to the tribesmen once the system of *sābiqa* precedence collapsed. So, the distributive system of posts and wealth was the essential for keeping loyalty. True, a governor like 'Ubaydallāh might have his personal praetorian guard and there was a police force for keeping general order. (p.114) But once his authority was seriously challenged he had no other recourse but to flee to Damascus or take refuge with some tribe, as we saw both with Ziyād and his son. Essentially therefore, Umayyad power, certainly in the ex-Sasanid lands, stemmed from appointing cronies to the great posts and manipulating the tribal system through the *ashrāf*, determined to conserve the privileges they had acquired through conquest.

#### Balanced oppositions? Yaman-Nizār

But the game changed once al-Malik b. Marwān (65-86/685-705) established himself and dealt with the Zubayrids (73/692), finally to appoint the 33 year old Hajjaj to Iraq in 75/694. But not that much. Central authority in the provinces was basically achieved through balanced

oppositions. Crone (1994), in analyzing the posts distributed by the Caliphs for her critique of Shaban, has shown that the Umayyads of the Marwânid period were much more even handed in the attribution of appointments between Qays/Muḍar and Yaman than is generally made out, though that balance is less conspicuous when one contrasts the eastern wing of empire with the western. In the former none of the tribes was an enthusiastic supporter of the Umayyads. Tamîm might be Muḍar, but after their involvement with 'Ali they could hardly be counted on for support of the Damascus government. There was a distinct Iraq *versus* Syria sentiment and that, in no small measure, cut across the Yaman and Muḍar affiliation between the two provinces, *a fortiori* since the history of the origins and the settlement of the tribes in both regions were generally quite different. Iraqi Yaman essentially consisted of two great tribal groupings in Kûfa, the one largely southern Arabian and the other largely Yemeni, but generally recognizing the supreme leadership of a Kindi; and in Basra, Azd from Oman, themselves divided into three major groupings, but finally more or less welded together by the Muhallabids. So the potential for making common alliance was undermined by the fact that the interests of Kûfa and Basra were quite distinct. Nevertheless, there was a tribal division, which partly identified itself as being between Yaman and Muḍar, present in both Iraq and Syria, and the secret of government was to maintain tensions between the component blocks in both regions to stop them making common cause. In the Iraq-Khurâsân domain, for example, Tamîm might not be enthusiastic supporters of the government regime, but when faced with Rabî'a had no doubts about identifying as Muḍar. The result was continuous tribal tension, held in check by the fairly even balance that existed between the moiety divisions. If we take the much quoted 96/715 figures in Khurâsân,<sup>45</sup> that is the year al-Walîd (**p.115**) died, there were 9,000 Ahl al-'Âliya, 10,000 Tamîm, 7,000 Bakr b. Wâ'il, 4,000 'Abd al-Qays and 10,000 Azd from the *muqâtila* of Basra in Khurâsân. Additionally there were 7,000 Kûfans and 7,000 *mawâli*. Leaving aside the last, this was a fairly balanced distribution between Muḍar and Yaman in Khurâsân, as in Basra itself, with the first two allied, and much of Rabî'a aligned with Azd. The tension arose from the fact that al-Muhallab, who was awarded the governorship in 77/696, was very much orientated towards the Azd alliance. So the Umayyad government did not need any major outside force to keep control in this distant province, merely to ensure that al-Muhallab remained loyal through the enjoyment of his position: that is, until Ibn al-Ash'ath revolted.

Initially, Hajjaj had been appointed governor only in Iraq, but shortly after al-Muhallab's appointment he became supreme governor over the East. Leaving al-Muhallab in Khurâsân, he sent Ibn al-Ash'ath with the famous Peacock Army to deal with Seistan. This is certainly not the place to analyse the Kindi leader's revolt,<sup>46</sup> but the immediate threat to Iraq was only removed after Hajjaj brought in Syrian troops and Ibn al-Ash'ath refused the terms he was offered. And that was in the same year as al-Muhallab died, 82/701, to be succeeded by his son Yazîd (53-102/673-720). It was now that Hajjaj could really start building his power-base and found Wâsiṭ, midway between Basra and Kûfa, garrisoned with Syrian troops. These he also started to introduce into Khurâsân, along with *mawâli* soldiery. The exact composition of the Syrian troops is not clear, but after Marj Râhiṭ they were essentially tribally inimical to Yaman, particularly the great Yamani tribes of Iraq. So Hajjaj was not only centralizing power in his domain through the use of Syrians, but also deliberately following an anti-Yaman policy. That became even more apparent after Yazîd b. al-Muhallab was broken: as Crone has shown, all the sub-governors were then appointed from Qays and Muḍar.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, the Thaqaḥis held the power in Yemen

itself, ruthlessly exploiting and persecuting the population, even though it formed part of the 'ushr lands. Nevertheless, the role of the Syrians in Iraq in the last quarter of the first century *hijri* should not be exaggerated; they were essentially a force to be thrown onto one or other side of the tribal balance. The basic policy remained the same, divide and rule. Whence Yazîd b. al-Muhallab's demands for a greater Iraqi participation in central government, the departure of the Syrian troops and that Hazzaj's policy would not be re-imposed on the Iraqis. Crone<sup>48</sup> sees this as an opportunistic interest in the Iraqi cause; I would suggest it was to reestablish the general Yamani precedence there. That, I would agree, had **(p.116)** not been particularly close to Yazîd's heart in the past, for neither he nor his father had come to the support of Ibn al-Ash'ath. Had the two great Yamani generals made common cause the authority of Syrian government in the East would have been annihilated. As it was, each was picked off, one after the other, but only just.

Maintaining a balance with Yaman also involved Muḍar creating a wider form of tribal alliance. As we have seen, South Arabian Yamani identity had deep roots, though it did not necessarily operate as a block. Indeed, there was major rivalry in Kûfa between the two main Yamani sevenths, which stemmed in part from pre-Islamic rivalries within their homelands and this surfaced in the conflict between al-Ash'ath al-Kindi and al-Ashtar al-Nakhâ'i at Şiffîn. It continued between the two sons, Ibrâhîm b. al-Ashtar who joined Mukhtâr's uprising with various Yamani groups that had continued to follow his leadership,<sup>49</sup> and was opposed *inter alia* by Muḥammad b. al-Ash'ath who was pro-Ibn Zubayr, as were the Basrans. Eventually Mukhtâr was dealt with by the double blow of a Syrian army under 'Ubaydallâh b. Ziyâd, who inflicted a major defeat (67/686) at Khâzir near Mosul and was finished off by al-Muhallab who led the Basran army on behalf of Muş'ab. That left two great Yamani leaders in Iraq, Ibn al-Ash'ath ('Abd al-Raḥmân b. Muḥammad b. al-Ash'ath) who now held more or less complete sway over the Kûfan Yamani, including Madhḥij, and al-Muhallab, with his formidable family. They were not actually rivals but they had little in common, since the former operated primarily in the Kûfan domain with South Arabian tribes and the latter in the Basran with Omani. Nevertheless, there was a risk, in Iraq at least, of Yaman making common cause, despite their internal splits, and to reject their strong sense of identity simply because the Syrian Quḍâ'a seem to demonstrate that genealogy could be switched at will, is to throw the sense of south Arabian identity out with the Quḍâ'i bath water. Nizâr, on the contrary did largely develop by accretion. Northern Arab identity grew from a core of Ma'add to extend through both his supposed parentage and descent to include 'Adnân and Nizâr, until it eventually incorporated such major groupings as Rabî'a and thereby create a genealogical 'moiety', counterbalancing Yaman. That process was not really completed until the old Rabî'a-Yamani alliance was broken in 'Abbasid times, but it started with the unleashing of anti-Yamani sentiment in Iraq, and it was the defeat of Ibn al-Ash'ath followed by that of Yazîd b. Muhallab that that finally provided a fertile ground for the Ibâḍi seed to take root.

#### **(p.117)** The fall of the Muhallabids

Al-Muhallab's reputation was immense, amongst enemies and allies alike. That is clear from the fact that al-Ahnaf was to the fore in putting his Tamîm under his leadership. But as we must again emphasize, it was a military leadership, not that of the tribal *ashrâf* which the al-Ash'ath family represented. But it is also true that he recruited essentially from the Azd 'Umân, thereby

reinforcing the earlier Azd who had been sent to Khurâsân by Ziyâd b. Abîhi. So it was thanks to al-Muhallab and his patronage that Azd fortunes were made and the Omanis acquired position.

Yazîd succeeded his father, strongly supported by his brothers, and was an easier person for Hajjaj to deal with, partly because of his character but more because of changed circumstances. Whatever the truth of the story related in classical sources that their enmity stemmed from a divination in which Hajjaj was told that a man called Yazîd would replace him, it certainly is not the essential feature of their relationship. 'Awtabi's lengthy biography of Yazîd<sup>50</sup> has no reference to it, and the cause of enmity is clearly stated as jealousy of Muhallabid power. Hajjaj was fully aware that al-Muhallab had been a Zubayrid, but as with Ibn al-Ash'ath, he needed the Yamani leaders' support while he established power, and they in turn were aware of that fact. The *ashrâf* in Iraq had generally been supportive of central government (Umayyad or Zubayrid), in the interests of maintaining their status, although some of the lesser Yamani leaders in Kûfa had joined in the Shi'i revolts. But the two great leaders operated essentially in different spheres and ensured that they did not clash. Ibn al-Ash'ath warned his companions in the final stages of his revolt not to trespass on Yazîd's domain, when they proposed retreating from Seistan to Khurâsân, for there was a real danger he would then join the Syrian forces.<sup>51</sup> And there was indeed confrontation, following Ibn al-Ash'ath's own death, when Yazîd, still formally Hajjaj's governor in Khurâsân, dealt with the remaining *mawâli* who entrenched themselves there, capturing their leader, Fîrûz Ḥuşayn, al-Ash'ath's *mawlâ* from a noble Sasanid house, and sending him to Hajjaj who tortured him to death.<sup>52</sup> But Yazîd was more than aware that he was now exposed, and disregarded calls to come to Wâsiṭ. In the end Hajjaj persuaded 'Abd al-Malik to dismiss him and others of the family holding office. He was imprisoned, tortured, and his wealth extorted. In Khurâsân he was replaced by Qutayba b. Muslim of the Muḍar tribe of Bâhila. Under **(p.118)** 'Abd al-Malik's successor al-Walîd (86-96/705-15) Hajjaj had a free hand, all the more so because the new Caliph in part owed his position to his support. With Yazîd under arrest and the family power broken, he started a smear campaign against the Azd, using one of al-Muhallab's former generals, al-Khiyâr b. (Abi?) Sabra b. Dhuwayb/ Dhu'ayb al-Mujâshi'i.<sup>53</sup>

Earlier, it would seem when 'Abd al-Malik was still alive, Hajjaj had reduced Oman, which had not recognized the Umayyad Caliph and had increasingly become a refuge for dissidents. After several attacks had been driven off by the Julandâ brothers, Sa'id and Sulaymân b. 'Abbâd, including that of a major force under command of a Mâzini (al-Qâsim b. Shi'wa),<sup>54</sup> Hajjaj restrained the Azd leaders in Basra from giving assistance to their countrymen and dispatched a large force, reputedly 40,000 strong, from their Nizâri enemies under the leadership of Qâsim's brother, Mujâ'a. One half advanced overland to Julfâr (through Baynûna?), the other, with Mujâ'a, was transported to the lower Batina by a fleet of 300 boats which he anchored in Muscat harbour. The account of what happened is extremely confusing and of dubious reliability, but it seems that the Julandâ inflicted a major defeat, first at Bawshar and then Sumâyil, whereupon Mujâ'a made for his ships, of which Sulaymân managed to burn some fifty before they could make off to Julfâr. There he wrote to Hajjaj, who reinforced him with 5,000 Syrian nomads, but an Azdi with them managed to warn the Julandâ. Realizing that they could not deal with this new situation they took flight to East Africa (*balad min buldân al-zanj*), leaving the victors to wreak revenge. The traitorous Khayâr received his reward by being appointed governor.

---

There is much that is suspect in this account, both geographically and in the numbers, which are certainly exaggerated, and it features only in the somewhat unreliable late *siyar* compilations.<sup>55</sup> But that Oman had to be brought under Umayyad control forcibly is certain, and other accounts say that Hajjaj was then able to use it as a place of exile for suspected **(p.119)** opponents of the regime, which included figures like the Ibâdi leader Jâbir b. Zayd and his disciple Hubayra.<sup>56</sup> That, I suspect, is fable, but there is evidence from one of Jâbir's letters that towards the end of his life Oman was under foreign occupation, and coins have been found of post-reform Umayyad type from an Omani mint (Sohar) dating to 81 and 90.<sup>57</sup> But perhaps the essential point to retain is that, to fight the Azd, the government was using Nizâr tribes from Iraq and Syria, a situation that was repeated 200 years later in the invasion of Oman after the civil war there.

There was a brusque change in fortunes following the death of al-Walîd, a few months after his faithful Hajjaj. By this time Yazîd had escaped from prison with his half-brother al-Mufaddal in 90/709 and taken refuge with the Azd in Palestine, finding a protector in the governor, al-Walîd's younger brother Sulaymân, who persuaded the Caliph to grant him *amân*. And it was Sulaymân, who also detested Hajjaj, who succeeded to the Caliphate. So once again the situation was reversed. Yazîd was appointed to Iraq, to which was then added Khurâsân, and in a wave of hatred against the old regime it was Hajjaj's family that paid the penalty. Revenge was also taken in Oman. After Hajjaj's death in 95/714 Walîd had confirmed Khayâr in office there, along with the other arrangements Hajjaj had made for his succession in Iraq. Amongst these was that his former secretary, Yazîd b. Abi Muslim (for whom Jâbir b. Zayd worked in the *dîwân*; see Chapter 6), should retain control over the finances, and he now sent Sayf b. Hâni al-Hamdâni as his tax-collector in Oman. Sulaymân's immediate reaction on becoming Caliph was to replace all his predecessor's appointments, designating Şâlih b. 'Abd al-Rahmân al-Laythi (the unsuccessful general sent by Muş'ab b. al-Zubayr to deal with Najda al-Ḥanafi's Khâriji state) as governor to replace Khayâr in Oman. But he quickly changed his mind and put Şâlih in charge of tax-collecting in Iraq. So when Yazîd was reappointed to the overall governorship he requested that Şâlih retain this unpopular but profitable task, and wrote to Sayf al-Hamdâni ordering him to depose Khayâr and await the arrival of his brother. When Ziyâd b. al-Muhallab arrived he did everything to shame the deposed governor and later, on receipt of orders from Yazîd, put him to death.<sup>58</sup>

Popular as he was with his Azdi troops, Yazîd's ruthless pursuit of revenge turned many against him, including al-Ḥasan al-Başri, with the **(p.120)** result that later he found potential allies in Basra failing to come to his assistance. Sulaymân unexpectedly died after only a couple of years and was succeeded, equally unexpectedly, by 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz ('Umar II 99–101/717–20), that is the son of 'Abd al-Malik's brother. Yazîd was arrested for misappropriation of the booty (*ghanîma*) in his conquests in Eastern Persia, although escaping torture this time round, and his position in Iraq was taken by 'Adi b. Arta at al-Fazâri. 'Adi decided on a stringent policy in Oman (where Ziyâd had taken refuge with the Yamani tribes) and appointed several governors in the territory. How far 'Adi was acting at 'Umar's behest is not clear, but when the Omanis forcefully complained he sent an appeasing letter reproving 'Adi for misuse of the *zakât*, stating that it was primarily for use in the country concerned and not remitted to Iraq,<sup>59</sup> and instructing his replacement, 'Umar b. 'Abdullâh b. Abi Şubayḥa al-Anşâri, to reach agreement with the country's leaders over how it was to be collected. After both sides had given guarantees, the

garrison was withdrawn and al-Anṣārī governed as had been the custom in the time of the Orthodox Caliphs. And when 'Umar died he simply handed the country back to Ziyād saying it was the country of his people and his affair.

In the meantime Yazîd had again escaped from prison, and when 'Umar died was negotiating with the governor of Basra. 'Umar was succeeded by Yazîd b. 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwân, who was violently anti-Yaman, or at least Iraqî Yaman, and Yazîd b. al-Muhallab openly declared a civil war against him, occupying Basra and imprisoning its governor. The Caliph sent a force of Syrian Yaman against him under the command of his brother Maslama, and in the autumn of the same year Yazîd's army, mostly made up of Azd tribesmen but also including Kinda and Rabî'a under the command of a nephew of Ibn al-Ash'ath, and also some Tamîm and Muḍar, was defeated and Yazîd himself died heroically in battle.<sup>60</sup> As too did some prominent Omani Ibâḍis, as we shall see. It is interesting to note that the Caliph turned Syrian Yaman against Iraqî Yaman and that Yazîd's force contained Tamîm, who seem not to have performed very well. Their presence should cause no surprise, for some Tamîm had served in al-Muhallab's campaigns and their fortunes also related to Muhallabid power. The tactic of sending Syrian Yaman (Kalb, Lakhm, Ḥimyar, Ghassân, Hamdân, Quḍâ'a, Madhḥij, Khath'am, 'Âmila, Kinda, according to 'Awtabi) and no Rabî'a or Muḍar was subtle but should not disguise the fact that it was a Syrian army against a former governor turned rebel. The Kinda were Sakûn and Sakâsik, and like **(p.121)** Hamdân and Madhḥij, virtually absent in Oman; Ghassân was only nominally Azd, Ḥimyar *sui generis*, while the Kalb-Quḍâ'a were the Syrian pseudo-Yamani groups. And it was the Muhallabid family that the Caliph intended to destroy forever, pursuing the remnants to Qandâbîl and executing every male member of the family that fell into his hands. Those who escaped to Oman fled with Ziyād to Kirmân, and the subsequent history of the family, notably that of 'Abd al-Raḥman who joined the revolt of 'Abdullâh b. Mu'âwiya, and then as supporters of the early 'Abbasids had nothing to do with the Azd, Oman, or Ibâḍism. But the fact remains, that with the Muhallabids fell the fortunes of the Azd, the major tribal group of Oman, as had earlier that of the Kinda under Ibn al-Ash'ath, whose authority also far exceeded his tribal role. Both Yamani tribal groupings were now exposed to their old enemies and Tamîm triumphed. 'The fires of al-Mazûn have been extinguished, they sought to kindle a revolt but you have left no standard for them to follow nor any soldier of al-Muhallab's people', exulted the famous Tamîmi poet Jarîr.

Yaman was smashed and from now on the Azd and Kinda, closely linked in Oman and southern Arabia, were irreparably hostile to the Umayyad Caliphate and ready to make common cause. They found it in the ideology of one of the emerging so-called Khâriji schools, the nascent Ibâḍi movement which like the Omanis had developed in the Basra milieu. And it is significant that while neither Ibn al-Ash'ath, 'the weaver of the Kinda', or Yazîd, 'the sailor of the Azd', nor indeed Mukhtâr, had been preaching Khâriji principles they all nevertheless made their followers swear oaths of allegiance to the Book of God and the Sunna of his Prophet in the fight against the corrupt regime.<sup>61</sup> Basic Muhakkima precepts were imbued in the fight for justice in Iraq, at least notionally.

Notes:

(1) Hinds 1984.

(2) Hinds 1971b.



- (3) More likely Khamâmi, the important Shubâba Mâlik b. Fahm grouping from Tuwâm. There was a Hamîm group in the Ma'n.
- (4) Ṭabari, i. 3180, 3195, 3203; Ibn Durayd, *Ishtiqaq*, 483, 511; Ibn al-Kalbi, Escorial MS, fos. 67-8. Ibn al-Kalbi alone says Şabra was also killed in the battle, but is belied by later events.
- (5) Ṭabari, i. 3412 ff.; ABf212.
- (6) Ṭabari, ii. 1387; Ibn al-Kalbi (Escorial MS 64r) makes him a brother.
- (7) Ṭabari, i. 2698-9, quoted Hinds 1984: 218.
- (8) Carter *et al.* 2006.
- (9) Daryae 2003a and b.
- (10) Cf. *inter alia* Daghfous 1995: i. 471 ff.
- (11) For the above para. and the next two see Hinds 1971 b.
- (12) Again I rely heavily on Hinds (1972a), coupled with Madelung 1997.
- (13) The account is essentially based on Ṭabari and *EI2* 'al-djamal', occasionally modified in the light of Madelung 1997. But I have followed the affair essentially from the Omani point of view.
- (14) Abû Sufyân in Shammâkhi, 67, 72.
- (15) For details, see Madelung 1997: 300 ff.
- (16) Cf. notably Sharon 1983: 65 ff.
- (17) Ṭabari, ii. 79-81, 170, 240-1, 394 *et passim*. Also Zakeri 1995: 227 ff.
- (18) Ṭabari, i. 3412 ff.: Madelung 1997: 278 ff.
- (19) Ṭabari, ii. 79-81, 91.
- (20) 1983: 55 ff.
- (21) The *asâwira* remained of considerable importance until Hajjaj had their grants cancelled because they had supported the Zubayrids and joined Ibn al-Ash'ath's revolt (Balâdhuri, *Ansâb*, ivb. 373).
- (22) The first mention I have traced is one of Yazîd b. al-Muhallab's appointees.
- (23) ii. 450-1.
- (24) The alternative, which seems to make reference to Tanûkh, makes little sense, except we may notice that if Tanûkh there were, they had been led by Mâlik b. Fahm.

(25) Cf. Balâdhuri, *Ansâb*, ivb. 116 with Ṭabari, ii. 433.

(26) Abû 'Ubayda in Ṭabari, Ibn al-Kalbi in Balâdhuri, *Ansâb*, ivb. 98 and also Escorial MS 56v, plus the Omani sources, including Mubarrad, *Kâmil*, 610 and Ibn Durayd, *Ishtiqaq*, 502. The exception is the source 'Ali in Ibn Ḥazm, 359, who says he was 'Ataki. Not a surprising error, since up to then the previous leaders had been from the 'Atik and they regained power after Mas'ûd's death.

(27) Ṭabari, ii. 240-1.

(28) For his age see Balâdhuri, *Ansâb*, ivb. 100; for the relationship Ibn Durayd, *Ishtiqaq*, 502.

(29) Balâdhuri *Ansâb*, ivb. 97-123 and Ṭabari, ii. 433-66. The three main sets of sources with their own string of informants are the Basran Abû 'Ubayda Ma'mar, fuller in Ṭabari and probably the most reliable (see Madelung 1992 and Lecker 1995a), al-Mada'ini (mainly in Balâdhuri), and Ibn al-Kalbi (fuller in Balâdhuri).

(30) Balâdhuri, *Ansâb*, ivb. 98, 102; xi. 79; Ṭabari, ii. 517-18. This report about Mas'ûd being killed by the Khawârij is denied by Abû 'Ubayda Ma'mar.

(31) Balâdhuri, *Ansâb*, ivb. 121.

(32) Ibid. 95-6, 101-2; Ṭabari, ii. 514-16.

(33) Balâdhuri, *Ansâb*, xi. 80.

(34) Ibid. 89.

(35) 'Awtabi, AB162v.

(36) There is a great deal of confusion about who was appointed where and by whom in the Zubayrid period and how far they actually took up their appointments; cf. Miles 1960 and Mochiri 2000.

(37) Ṭabari ii, 587; cf. also 'Awtabi AB164r.

(38) Balâdhuri *Ansâb* xi, 102-3.

(39) Mubarrad *Kâmil* 636, 'Awtabi AB163v.

(40) 'Awtabi, AB164v.

(41) Ibn Durayd *Ishtiqaq* 483, AB161r.

(42) See in particular Hinds-'Awtabi §15, and for al-Muhallab's ennoblement §16. Much else of what follows may also be found in Hinds's translation.

(43) Cf. Crone and Hinds 1986.

(44) 1980, 31.

(45) Ṭabari ii, 1290-1.

(46) Reference may be made to L. Veccia Vaglieri's article in *EI2*.

(47) 1980: 46.

(48) 1994, 27-8.

(49) Cf. Hichem Djaït 1976 and in *EI2* al-Kûfa: also *EI2* al-Mukhtâr b. Abî 'Ubayd. (G. R. Hawting).

(50) AB166v-171r. This has been translated with full critical annotations by Hinds, posthumously published 1991.

(51) Ṭabari, ii. 1104-5.

(52) For details see Zakeri 1995: 222.

(53) 'Awtabi-Hinds §§ 64-4.

(54) Apparently in the (Sayḥ) Ḥaṭṭât area behind Muscat. It is curious that in this first major attempt the invaders operated in the Muscat hinterland and used Muscat (then of little importance) as a base. Perhaps they were trying to turn the major fortified centre of Damâ, controlling the Batina access into the Sumâyil Gap, and make for the interior to join up with the force coming down from Julfâr. In the second attempt Mujâ'a was reportedly defeated at Sumâyil, although in the end the invasion was successful. But strategically, in the light of the political geography of the time, the approach makes little sense, and I repeat, the accounts are highly confusing.

(55) *KK* 11-15, cf. also *Tuḥfa*, i. 74-8 (as also Ibn Ruzayq, *Imams*, with his usual unreliable embellishments). Interestingly enough this story does not feature in 'Awtabi's long biography of Yazîd b. al-Muhallab. While accepting that Oman was reduced by force, I am inclined to see the whole account of the conquest as an exaggeration and to treat the events and geography with mistrust.

(56) Shammâkhi, 76 and 81.

(57) Cf. Jâbir's letter no. 15 discussed further in Ch. 6: and for coins Central Bank of Oman 1990: ch. I, part I.

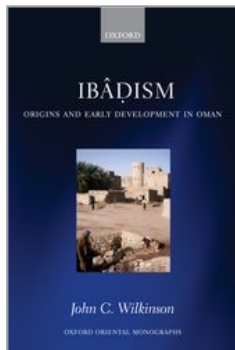
(58) The accounts in *KK* 14 and *Tuḥfa* i, 77-8 are somewhat confusing, but are clarified when read in conjunction with the detailed passage in 'Awtabi (AB168r) and the classical sources.

(59) Balâdhuri *Futûḥ*, 78.

(60) For details see Ṭabari under the year 102 and Hinds's (1991) translation and annotations of the relevant passages from 'Awtabi; also Bosworth 1968: 67 ff.

(61) For the oaths of Ibn al-Ash'ath and Mukhtâr see their entries in *EI2*, and for Yazîd, Ṭabari ii, 1398.

University Press Scholarship Online  
Oxford Scholarship Online



## Ibâḍism: Origins and Early Development in Oman

John C. Wilkinson

Print publication date: 2010

Print ISBN-13: 9780199588268

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2011

DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.001.0001

### The Origins of Ibâḍism

John C. Wilkinson

DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.003.0005

#### [-] Abstract and Keywords

This chapter examines Khâriji/Muhakkima beginnings, their adherence to the absolute authority of the Qur'ân, and the subsidiary role of the Prophet's *sunna*. All the early secessionists came from Kûfan Nizârî splinter groups and involved no Yaman tribes, either from Kûfa or Basra. The Ibâḍis recognize a true line of revolts down to the Tamîmi Abû Bilal (61/680), but no other until their own, sixty-seven years later. The characteristics of these early secessionists are examined. The Khawârij who went to Ibn Zubayr in 64, including the mysterious Ibn Ibâḍ, were Tamîm or Hanîfa (Nizâr) and the failure of their mission resulted in a split, represented as between the extremist Azâriqa and moderate Ibâḍis, with the Sufris somewhere between. This model does not stand up to examination. The non-Azâriqa were essentially divided between *qu'ûd* and *shirâ'* (quietists and activists), split ideologically over relations with other Muslims, maintaining unity, and when to secede (*khurûj*). The Sufris activated earlier than the Ibâḍis because they operated amongst the Iraqi Nizar tribes, and were first in North Africa. It was not dogma but the tribal domain that made Sufris and Ibâḍis rivals.

*Keywords:* Khawârij, Muhakkima, qu'ûd, shirâ', Ibn Zubayr, Azâriqa, Sufris, Ibâḍis

Ibâḍism reputedly emerged from a crisis amongst the Khawârij/ Muḥakkima following the death of Yazîd b. Mu'âwiya in 64/683. According to the general historical tradition,<sup>1</sup> the eponymous Ibn Ibâḍ was amongst the Khawârij who, under the leadership of Nâfi' b. al-Azraq, went to the help of Ibn Zubayr, besieged in Mecca. But after the siege was raised Ibn Zubayr, not surprisingly, refused to accept their condemnation of 'Uthmân and they returned to Basra, where political turmoil reigned. This led to a split in the movement, with the extremist Azâriqa

seceding to set up state in Ahwâz, threatening the city, the Ibâḍis taking the most moderate stance, and Şufri an intermediary position.

Accepting the year 64 as some sort of turning-point for the development of what became known as Ibâḍism, it can be seen that it emerged just halfway between the birth of the Islamic community and the first Ibâḍi political state, Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq's Imamate c. 128-9/744-6. One hundred and twenty or so years conventionally make up four generations (*ṭabaqât*). So, for example, in the history of the Muhallabid family it more or less covers the period of the eponym's father, Abû Şufra, al-Muhallab himself, that of his sons, who under Yazîd led the great revolt which saw the power of the Azd smashed, and their offspring, some of whom were active in the late Umayyad period in the so-called Third Civil War. For the Ibâḍis, the shorthand version of the four generations that represent the continuity of their movement from the origins of Islam ran: Ibn 'Abbâs, Jâbir b. Zayd, Abû 'Ubayda Muslim b. Abi Karîma, al-Rabî' b. Ḥabîb al-Farâhîdi.

Looked at in another way, four generations formed the best part of an Ibn Khaldûnian cycle, with only a final generation to go before the existing dynasty was replaced by a new one. Abû Ḥamza Mukhtâr b. 'Awf, with his band of fervent Ibâḍi youths who took the Holy Cities in 129/747, was determined that it should return to that same primitive form. It was a hopeless dream for a Muslim polity that had, it is true, started from small tribal (Ibn Khaldûn's *badw*) beginnings in Mecca and Madina, but which by 129 had established a major empire that extended from Transoxiana to North Africa and Spain, absorbing in the process (p.123) three major centres of traditional *ḥaḍâra* civilization, the Persian empire, Egypt, and part of 'Rûm', the Byzantine world. It was the agricultural production of these regions that provided the main wealth (*fay'*, *ṣawâfi*) of the new empire and its Arab elite, and as the possibilities of further conquest diminished so it became increasingly important that this land base be properly maintained and even expanded, and trade between its regional subsystems encouraged to integrate. And that highlighted the role of the Arabs in the threefold class structure that characterized the society of these conquered empires; in the case of the Sasanid empire a producing class, primarily peasants ('*ulûj*, *ahl al-arḍ/bilâd*, etc.), a military-bureaucratic level (*asâwira*, *dahâqîn*, *marâziba*), and a ruling religio-dynastic elite of the Sasanid family and priestly classes which they had now replaced.<sup>2</sup> The essential problem with respect to agricultural production was adscription (holding peasants on the land, albeit free in their person). The Hajjajian solution was to ensure that the tax regime continued to follow the status of the land and not the person, who remained tied to the village, even if he converted to Islam. The military-bureaucratic level raised the issue of the status of the *mawâli*. It was not just that land management and administration remained in the hands of this class, but assimilation of clients threatened the very identity of the Arabs themselves. To switch the regional dimension from the Persian to the 'Rûmi' empire, it was the Arabs who risked becoming 'civilized' and adopting the values of the *polis*, of becoming the *cives*, the urban elite living as a rentier class on the production of the *chora*, the rural hinterland. In other words, of being absorbed by an alien socio-political structure.

Whence a crisis in identity and the need to assert a racial entity through a formalized genealogical structure and semi-mythical pre-Islamic history. Three things maintained their superiority. It was they who had conquered. Huge quantities of ink have been spilt explaining

why they were successful. For the Arabs the answer was simple: because they were Muslims. It was they who had answered the call to Islam and it was they who fought to establish the true religion. And Islam had been revealed to his Prophet in the language of the Arabs. The Qur'ân was essentially their book and their universal guide, and for the Ibâḍis remained so. So much is obvious. Somewhat less so is that the leadership of the state should remain in pure, unadulterated Arab control. The guarantee of that, for most, was that it be vested in the descent of the Prophet's clan. For the Ibâḍis, both the issue of the leadership of the Islamic state and the status of the *mawâli* (p.124) remained problematic for a considerable time. To illustrate briefly: one of the first two schisms in their movement were the Ṭurayfiyya. 'Abdullâh b. Ṭurayf/Ṭarîf, was a close friend of 'Abdullâh b. Yaḥyâ (Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq). But when he proposed his daughter in marriage to him, the racial prejudice became apparent, for he was a *mawlâ* and Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq was an Arab. Whence the schism. The *fuqahâ'* who wrote of this to the Imam al-Ṣalt b. Mâlik al-Kharûṣi al-Yaḥmadi al-Azdi at the end of the 3/9<sup>th</sup> century might also have added, and furthermore Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq was a Kindi of noble lineage. Tribal *sharaf* was also part and parcel of the Arab identity issue. For the Omanis, the matter was simply resolved. Never did the Imamate pass out of the hands of the elite clans of the Azd leadership. And in the Berber lands the only full Imamate was conferred on the descent of a (reputed) member of the Sasanid royal family!

So when Ibâḍism began to develop it was in a society in transition, still essentially tribal in mentality, but developing dynastic power and the associated attributes of a standing army and a bureaucratic administration. The Arabs and their immediate followers were still a violent society, continuously in a state of upheaval (*fitna*), arrogant and vicious in their search for wealth and office, with an ethos that remained based in notions of *sharaf* and an ideology of the privileged warrior class (*muqâtila*). Plunder (*ghanîma*) and enslavement (*sibâ'*) of the enemy were their rewards, and even peace agreements (*ṣulḥ*) were frequently based on a contribution in the form of slaves ('*alâ'* -*raqîq*). All conquering societies have enjoyed *butin de guerre*, and that of itself was not in question (though there were refinements of the basic Islamic principals requiring elaboration); so long as it was clear that these laws did not apply when Muslim fought Muslim. What essentially was in dispute was who got what and the resulting accusations of misappropriation. At stake were Islamic versus tribal precedence (*sâbiqa* versus *sharaf*), and political and tribal bias in appointments and opportunity to accrue wealth. Ideologically the question of precedence lay at the roots of the Muḥakimma's alienation, while the political rivalry increasingly came to be seen in terms of Nizâr versus Yaman. Yet that tribal polarity, to which the ideological became in some measure linked, did in part reflect the very real diverse experiences of the Arabs and associated dynasties, both in Arabia itself and as marginal elements in the great pre-Islamic political empires. To make matters worse, the Muslim community had not developed any coherent theory of state leadership, merely an extrapolation from the limited experience of the selection of four Caliphs, only two of whom, it was generally agreed, were rightly guided throughout their term of office, and three of whom had been murdered. Even their 'election' had been subject to considerable political manoeuvring, with Ali believing he should have been first choice, while 'Uthmân's selection in the end proved (p.125) a disaster. But because of the way he had been confronted and murdered, 'Ali was challenged by Ṭalha and al-Zubayr, backed by 'Â'isha, who had done everything to do 'Ali out of his supposed rights from the day the Prophet died. And there were two others also waiting in the

wings to assert a claim, Mu'âwiya and Marwân. Another factor contributing to division in the community, albeit less obvious, was the fact that 'Umar had formally divided the Muslim state into seven geopolitical *amṣâr* with very different characteristics: two are basic to our story, Basra and Bahrayn-'Umân (i.e. the Gulf), and for the Khawârij as a whole, Kûfa also.

The only peaceful centripetal force to hold this fissiparous empire together was the message of Islam itself. And that, of course, became the fundamental issue, what precisely was it? So the nascent Ibâḍi community, in so far as it existed, had to make up its mind over what was and what had not been acceptable in the preceding half-century or so. On the one side there was the essential problem of *ta'wîl*, interpretation of the basic tenets of the Qur'ân plus the so-called *sunnat al-nabî* for matters appertaining; on the other, how far the political leadership had conformed to these Islamic norms. What about 'Uthmân, al-Zubayr, Ṭalḥa, 'Â'isha? And what of 'Ali? Muḥakkima Khârijism had essentially been a matter for the Kûfans at the start, but secession from the 'unjust' *khalîfa* was a much wider, and ongoing, problem. Basra had its own early version of Khârijism, exemplified by the secession of the Omani Khirrît b. Râshid al-Nâji who set up an independent community, rejecting 'Ali. But had he done so for the right reason? There were many who refused 'Ali, but for the wrong reasons. And in any case, was secession of itself an acceptable solution? That of course raised the issue of *hijra*, a tradition as old as Arab society itself, with the discontented tribe upping stakes and moving to establish itself in an area where government conformed to its notions of a moral economy, with a resulting loss of face (*wajh*) and shame ('*ayb*) for the ruler of the territory they had quit. But in the case of Islam was there not a single unique *hijra*? And if that were the case, what about the *amṣâr*? Migration to Kûfa, Tawwaj, Basra, and so on made sense, for they were like the original urban centres of Mecca and Madina, focal points for directing the Muslim campaign. But 'Umar also designated Bahrayn-cum-'Umân as a *miṣr*, and that was a huge area, with no obvious 'capital'. But for the Khawârij the burning issue after 64 was whether *khurûj* was the same thing as *hijra*. The Ibâḍis were firmly of the opinion that it was not.

Whatever Western scholars argue by extrapolation from existing records concerning notions of *hijra* and the related *ḥadîths*, it seems perfectly clear that this issue was fundamental from the start and must have been discussed in a large variety of circumstances other than those recorded (**p.126**) in the histories. One aspect involved the bedu and re-beduinization: initially, whether or not the *a'râb* should make a *hijra* to a *miṣr*<sup>3</sup>; later (under 'Uthmân it appears) there were attempts to exclude them so that they should not share in the diminishing availability of stipends. It was clearly a matter the Ibâḍis felt strongly about, as witness the statements already quoted from Sâlim b. Dhakwân, the history of the Mâlik b. Fahm bedu tribes arrival in Basra and their subsequent role in al-Muhallab's campaigns, and the fact that the recruits mustered by Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq and Abû Ḥamza Mukhtâr b. 'Awf were 'callow young men, barefoot Bedouins'. And indeed, I would add that the person who was perhaps the first real proto-Ibâḍi, Ḍumâm (or Ḍimâm) b. al-Sâ'ib, was of Omani bedu origin.

### Ḥadîth

And here again I would stick my neck out on another fundamental controversy, with a few preliminary words on that problem of *ḥadîth*, which will be discussed much more fully in due course. *Ḥadîth*, in the sense of what was related concerning the Prophet and his community, was

---



part and parcel of Islam, the general corpus of common knowledge about the Prophet in the early Islamic community, that ill-defined *sunnat al-nabî* which features in the protests of Khawârij and non-Khawârij alike against central government. Like the Hebrew term *davar*, *ḥadath* has a sense of event and word. Events cannot be separated from those who recount or record them, and it is perhaps significant that *aḥdâth* early on became associated with wrongdoings. It was when it became necessary to sort out what was right from wrong in the *fitna* (whichever one that may be) that the reliability of the source for the statement took on a new prominence. It was only when people began to say, 'how do you know?' or 'who says?' that *ḥadîth* qua *ḥadîth* start coming into existence. And that very questioning, which brought about the need to provide a train of transmitters (*isnâd*), itself indicates a growing questioning, the seeds of doubt and scepticism (*shakk*). Which in turn means that what preceding generations may have accepted was called into question. That became a vital issue for the early Ibâḍis, for if each generation has left its indelible imprint (*âthâr*) of consensu al opinion about right and wrong, then one rejects those who question that consensus (the *shukkâk*), while *isnâds* in turn are considered an innovation, since it is the method of the 'ahl al-sunna' who reject their opponents as 'ahl al-bida'' whose reliability is not to be trusted, as a Successor, Ibn Sîrîn (d. 110/728), had supposedly stated. So whether called *ḥadîth*, *akhbâr*, *riwâya*, *aqwâl*, or *sunna*, reports (p.127) of what the Prophet said and did and which the Muslims had learned from each other, as too the local traditions picked up on the Hajj, existed *ab initio*. And we can be pretty sure that there was little of importance on such a matter as *hijra* which the Prophet might have pronounced that did not have a wide currency in the community, in some form or other. An example is provided in the *Sîra* of Sâlim b. Dhakwân (§77), precisely over this issue, where he quotes what he has heard (*balaghanâ*) the Apostle of God had said (*qâl*) about it to reinforce his own argument. Rather than look at this as a potential interpolation or going into a deep scholastic argument based on what was recorded much later concerning the circumstances under which variants of the relevant 'ḥadîth' came into existence,<sup>4</sup> it could be argued that (whatever the dating of Sâlim) the essential *matn* was current in the Islamic community from the earliest times and known to the Muhakkima. It formed part of what Calder terms 'community Sunna'.<sup>5</sup> The precise wording or where it originated was largely irrelevant.

Again, if Ibn Ibâḍ, or whoever wrote the 'second letter' (IB 2), attacks the Shi'a for taking *ḥadîth* as their religion the author is essentially getting at the fact that they claimed to have a direct private line to the Prophet and were using this to put false reports around. But it would be most surprising if 'Ali did not talk about what he had learnt, experienced, or heard as a member of the family, and such reports *ipso facto* were no basis for rejection. The early Ibâḍi attitude is clearly spelt out by Shabîb b. 'Aṭiyya, who was involved in establishing the short-lived Imamate of Julandâ b. Mas'ûid, c. 131/748-9, after the collapse of that of Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq (cf. Chapter 7). In his vigorous *Sîra*, which I believe was written before these events, he makes the position of what he calls the *dhawû'l-albâb* quite clear. Truth stems from *Kitâb Allâh*, the *Sunna* of his Prophet and the guidance of the two who followed, Abû Bakr and 'Umar. They are *ḥalâl Allâh* until the day of resurrection; the rest is *ḥarâm*. Shabîb's Muhakkima origins are clearly brought out by no less than forty-seven Qur'ânic quotations in repudiating those who are blind in their *baṣar*. He runs through many of the principal opponents, who all use a *ḥadîth* which he quotes, to sustain their position. They are all wrong; for example, those who claim there will be *fitan* like the

darkest night when those seated (i.e. *qa'ada*) will be better than the stander, and so on; or again, those who quote the Prophet to say that the *ahl Badr* disputed and fought and killed each other, misinterpreting what Sura al-Ḥajar 47 says; or what the Prophet supposedly said when he gave Muḥammad b. Maslama al-Anṣârî a sword. He really has it in for Ibn Mas'ûd (d. 32/642), that *ghulâm* of 'Uthmân who was the *ṣâhib al-masjid* at Kûfa who led astray by *bida'* and **(p. 128)** *ḥadath. Kull muḥdatha bid'a*. Ibn Mas'ûd was *ḍa'îf<sup>an</sup> naḥîl<sup>an</sup>* ... 'how can you leave the *Sunna* of the Prophet and accept the innovations of 'Uthmân with the "stuffing" of Ibn Mas'ud?', he asks. Evidence that the Ibâḍis were to the fore amongst those who claimed what the *muḥaddithûn* said was *ḥashw*.

Even after Sunni criteria began to take hold and the Ibâḍis themselves started quoting *ḥadîth*, they were normally no more than recommendable behaviour or reinforcements of already existing revealed law. Ibn Baraka, in his *K. al-Muwâzana* (towards mid-4/10<sup>th</sup> century), makes this abundantly clear, although taking care not to use the term Sunni. To have seen the Prophet was not of itself reliable testimony constituting incontestable proof. There were two *ṭarîqas*, that of *al-sam'*, that is, the revealed law, and that of *'aql*. The latter divided into two: that which was unequivocal, the Unity of God, his Omniscience, his All Power; and their derivatives, over which there was dispute, *'ilm* and *qudra* and indeed the nature of these *ṣifa*. *'Aql* alone could not provide proof of a *farîḍa* and at best was a *faḍîla*. So all those who now claimed to have this new revealed truth had no right to condemn others to eternal hellfire. What of those who were good Muslims before these new revelations?

So what the early Ibâḍis had to do was sift through all this evergrowing material floating around the community as supply met demand, in order to reach a consensual view of what was acceptable. Not through the criteria that the proto-Sunnis were developing, which in any case only really caught hold after the Ibâḍi movement had started developing its own *âthâr*, but the guidance provided by the leading figures of each generation. And that, once decided, devolved on the next generation. In other words, the collective *âthâr* formed their line of transmission (essentially through teachers in the early days), not reports passed on by individuals of more or less reliability who made up the *isnâd* chain. And since it was a consensual view there was no need, normally, to say how that view was reached. The names of individuals were largely irrelevant, since they were absorbed into the Islamic family to which they belonged (*nasaba*); the essential was the Qur'ân and the *qibla*.<sup>6</sup> Only later, as material became recorded and effort made to preserve what earlier *'ulamâ'* had said, did it sometimes become desirable to identify the individual responsible, and only much later, when Ibâḍism started conforming to the Sunni norms of a *madhhab*, did it become necessary to create a lineage and rationalize these *âthâr* in terms of an Ibâḍi *ḥamalât al-'ilm* chain back to the Prophet ('Awtabi), and finally in the Maghrib the production of their own *ḥadîth* collection: that is, the supposed *Musnad* of al-Rabî' b. Ḥabîb (see Chapter 14).

### **(p.129)** The Murji'ites<sup>7</sup>

So, returning now to the more specific situation prevailing around our date of 64, 'Uthmân and 'Ali were a quarter of a century and more in the past. More to the point, in the eyes of many, was the current situation, notably the growing radicalization of the Shi'a. Hence the rise of a moderating school trying to reconcile the 'Uthmâniyya with moderate Shi'i views and effectively

---

saying: 'Let's stop arguing about 'Uthmân and 'Ali and concentrate on the existing state of affairs. Let's leave the past to look after itself and agree to disagree, to suspend judgement (*irjâ'*) and leave it to God to decide.'

This 'Murji'ite' school developed essentially in Kûfa, which is where the two other 'revolutionary' movements had roots, early Khârijism and Shi'ism. Politically, therefore, they were all rivals, but at the same time potential allies. One thing is clear from Sâlim b. Dhakwân's epistle, the early Murji'ites were neither quietists, nor in favour of reconciliation with the existing regime. Far from it! What they were attempting was to preserve the unity of the Muslim community, an admirable objective from the quietist Khawârij point of view. Even the activist Shabîb uses this term *jamâ'at al-Muslimîn* for the true *firqa*. It was Mu'âwiya, 'Amr b. al-'Âṣ and the people of Shâm who were the Khawârij (*kharajû min ummat Muḥammad*), as too Nâfi' b. al-Azraq, 'Atiyya, Dâwud, and so on who *marâqa min al-dîn wa kharaja min al-umma*. Or as the Maghribi Ibn Sallâm puts it, '*wa dînunâ dîn al-jamâ'a min aṣḥâb al-nabî*', the communal *dîn* before the *umma* split and disputed.<sup>8</sup> So the objective was the same for the Muhakkima and the Murji'a, but the latter achieved it by suspending judgement over the first *fitna* on the principle that they had not witnessed events and there was conflict amongst those who had. There was no dispute about the first two Caliphs being rightly guided, but where there was contention, as over 'Uthmân and 'Ali, they refused to take a position, nor could they pronounce on what happened to them in the next world. There were two elements in their argument. The first was the rights and wrongs about 'Uthmân and 'Ali. That was not acceptable to any Khârij movement, moderate or extremist. It raised the whole basic principle on which the Muhakkima party had come into existence. The second was that Muslims must be accepted as believers even if they sin, and damnation or salvation was in the hands of God. The first part of this proposition, that they should not be considered as *mushrikûn*, was a *sine qua non* of the **(p.130)** moderate Khawârij: after all, that was what distinguished them from Azâriqa. But whether designated *munâfiqûn* or *kuffâr*, they were destined to eternal hellfire and what the Murji'ites were raising was the possibility of redemption. That was contradictory to the prevailing belief of a perfect symmetry between sinners in this world being damned and the righteous saved, as elaborated too in the Ibâḍi doctrine of *walâya* and *barâ'a*.

But by Sâlim's time there was another inconsistency emerging. While their doctrine of suspending judgement worked for 'Uthmân and 'Ali when it initially took form, it was irrelevant to the early Umayyads, for there were those alive who could bear witness to the deviations of Mu'âwiya and his governors; which had the merit, at least, that the Murji'ites were not preaching a quietist approach with regards to the new regime. But as generations progressed their criterion of suspending judgement on a disputed past of necessity devolved on attitudes to the dynasty as a whole, since there were good Muslims prepared to speak up for them, as well as those who condemned them. Hence, in due course, the Murji'ites came to be seen as a quietist school that accepted the existing order, denying that 'deeds' were necessary for piety. But while that was not the case when Sâlim was writing, the problem was emerging, for he accuses them of inconsistency in calling on the new generations to condemn Mu'âwiya and his successors, yet suspending judgement on his two predecessors. Which implies, incidentally, that both Sâlim and the Murji'ites of his period were of a later generation than the first Umayyad Caliphs.

However, the fact that Sâlim devotes so much of his polemic to the Murji'ites indicates it was not just the issue of the first *fitna* that was at stake. After all, Basra, where Ibâḍism took root, had been fairly pro-'Uthmân, and certainly the Azd had remained favourable to Ibn Zubayr; nor was the antipathy to 'Ali deep, even amongst the more moderate Khawârij at Kûfa. So some sort of forgiveness for their errors was not totally abhorrent. Was there not something more fundamental in the notion of retrospective suspended judgement which challenged the very basis on which the Ibâḍi school developed? We shall return to this once we have discovered how and when Ibâḍism really came into existence.

### Secession

Like the Murji'ites, the same fundamental questions faced the Khawârij concerning what to do about the existing state of affairs: 'If the present regime is unjust, what should be done? Do we secede, or do we put up with it and try and reform the government?' One school preached *shirâ'*, militancy on the model of a line running from Nahrawân to Abû Bilâl Mirdâs b. Udayya. Others held the essential was to maintain the unity of **(p.131)** the community (*jamâ'at al-muslimîn*) at all costs. For the Ibâḍis, who subscribed to the secession idea in theory but were reluctant to put it into practice, that argument was two-edged. Secession (not *hijra*) from the unjust ruler could be right, but if practised, then what was the relationship with the rest of the Muslim community who did not follow? That problem was posed from the start by the behaviour and practices of numerous bands who mustered under Muḥakkima principles, but it came acutely to the fore with the doctrine of the Azâriqa which polarized the nascent debate. But although rejecting, *grosso modo*, their doctrine, it does not necessarily follow that certain practices (notably *isti'râḍ*), which the Ibâḍis came to consider unacceptable, were not in fact practised by early Khawârij groups whom the Ibâḍis recognize as rightly guided, and may indeed have persisted even when they themselves eventually became active as a *da'wa*. There is perhaps some evidence of survival of more extremist views amongst those who considered themselves as part of the Ibâḍi *qawm* in the creed of Abû'l-Faḍl 'Isâ b. Furâk al-Khârijî established in Seistan, but who differed from the mainstream over the issue of non-Khârijite *ahl al-qibla*.<sup>9</sup>

### Relations with other Muslims

What was fundamentally unacceptable to Ibâḍism was the Azâriqa view that all who did not join them were *mushrikûn*. The *fuqahâ's* letter to al-Ṣalt makes clear that originally Nâfi' had sound people with him but then went wrong, to the extent that in the Ibâḍi heresiographies they are placed in the worst category of *kuffâr*<sup>10</sup> (along with the Wahhâbis in later times<sup>11</sup>). That echoes Ibn Ibâḍ's first letter (IB 1), in which he says that when the Azâriqa first rebelled they did so '*alâ'l-islâm*, but they apostatized and became infidels, having been believers. For the early Ibâḍis all the *ahl al-qibla* formed their *qawm*, but those who rejected their views were hypocrites, *munâfiqûn*. Hence they were not subject to *ghanîma* or *sibâ'* in war. What this meant once it became fully elaborated is spelt out at the end of the First Imamate in Oman in Bashîr b. Muḥammad b. Maḥbûb's *K. al-Muḥârabâ* and Abû'l-Ḥawâri's letter to the Hadramis **(p.132)** concerning *ṣalâḥ ahl-al-baghy*. But the basic principles they enounce were early on established, that the *ahl al-qibla* (this term effectively replaced *qawmnâ*) may not be plundered or enslaved. The only people whose life was forfeit were oppressors who failed to respond to the call (*da'wa*). Thus, their houses may not be plundered or burnt, either before or after the war, and so on and so forth. For those who failed to respond to the call but did not actively oppose, the penalty lay

entirely in the afterlife, whence what became known as the Ibâḍi problem, *al-mas ala al-ibâḍiyya*: 'do all those who die in the *Ibâḍi dîn* go to heaven and all those dying in dispute/conflict with them to hell?' The issue was elaborated in the *K. al-Jawâhir* by Aḥmad b. 'Abdullâh al-Kindi (author of the *Muṣannaḥ*, d. 447/1162), who concluded that the basic answer is yes, but he who does not know our beliefs but is a believer goes to heaven, but if an opponent to hell.

The classical sources, even relatively early ones, in fact attribute *kufr al-ni'ma* (ingratitude, negation of God's bounty) as the concept with which the founder of Ibâḍism distanced himself from other Kharijites. Crone and Zimmermann,<sup>12</sup> developing an observation of Cook's, have made an interesting study of this and state that the early Ibâḍis operated entirely with the concept of *nifâq*. The earliest they have traced *kufr al-ni'ma* is in the epistle of Abû Qaḥṭân Khâlîd b. Qaḥṭân (end 3/9<sup>th</sup> century), in connection with Iblîs, whereas elsewhere the author uses the familiar concept of *nifâq*. They note the use of *kufr al-ni'ma* seems to have gained ground in Oman in the following century, but in the Maghrib even later. Twentieth-century Ibâḍis take it for granted. In fact, leaving aside that IB 1 uses *kufr* and Ibn Ibâḍ is attributed by others with the concept of *kufr al-ni'ma* (see below), Mûsâ b. 'Ali (177-230/793-844), prominent in the early stages of setting up the Imamate in Oman, has a *sîra* addressed to the '*ulamâ*' and *shurât*,<sup>13</sup> which divides Muslims into Muslims proper and *kuffâr al-ni'am*, while Abû 'Abdullâh Muḥammad b. Mahbûb (d. 260/873) certainly used the term.

The man responsible for developing the *kufr* as opposed to *shirk* concept according to the *K. Abi Sufyân* (for this source see the next chapter) was the rather fiery and somewhat isolated proto-Ibâḍi figure of Abû Muḥammad al-Nahdi who preached that *ahl al-aḥdâth min al-qibla kuffâr, laysû bimushrikîn wa lâ mu'minîn*.<sup>14</sup> Madelung attributed this distinction to Jâbir b. Zayd, but that is because he has accepted Cook's suggested solution that Jâbir is the author of IB 1, which I question. And as will also be shown, Abû Muḥammad al-Nahdi was active about the time when Sâlim b. Dhakwân was writing and using the term *nifâq*.

**(p.133)** My own study of the evidence shows the two terms were not mutually exclusive and were probably used contemporaneously, and that gradually the *kufr* concept in its refined form of *kufr al-ni'ma* gradually displaced the *nifâq* classification. Both were using Qur'ânic-based concepts, the one of hypocrisy, pretence, claiming to be what you aren't (cf. Hajjaj's *yâ ahl al-'Irâq, yâ ahl al-nifâq*), the other that sin is some form of disbelief. Both were essentially saying the same thing, that wrongdoing was betrayal of true faith (*iymân*). Abû'l-Mu'thir al-Ṣalt b. Khamîs al-Kharûṣi (second half 3/9<sup>th</sup> century) has an interesting exposé on the *ahl al-kabâ'ir*,<sup>15</sup> the term that largely displaced the earlier *ahl al-aḥdâth*. There are two mutually exclusive groups of major sinners, *mushrikûn* and *munâfiqûn*. The latter are the *ahl al-kabâ'ir* of the *ahl al-qibla*. They are *fussâq, kuffâr, ḍullâl, fujjâr, ḡâlimûn, mujrimûn â'imûn*, call them whatever foul names you like, but do not attribute that of *shirk*. Such epithets can similarly be applied to the *ahl al-shirk*, but never *nifâq*. Some *ḍullâl* have claimed that the *ahl al-kabâ'ir* are neither *mu'minîn*, nor *kâfirîn*, nor *munâfiqîn*, nor *mushrikîn*. They are right about the first and last, but not the other two. He then goes on to show that these two middle categories are associated. If they are not grateful (*shâkirîn*) then they are *kâfirîn*. There are three classifications, *mu'min, mushrik, munâfiq*. The first is *al-muṭî'*, the second *al-munkir*, and the third *al-râkib al-kabâ'ir*.

---

Using Abû Muḥammad al-Nahdi's statement as the guideline (*dalîl*, but without actually identifying him as the author), he states: *ahl al-kabâ'ir min ahl al-qibla kuffâr munâfiqûn laysû bimushrikîn wa lâ mu'minîn*. But the essential difference from the *mushrik* is that the latter is liable to be killed whilst the former is subject to the *ḥadd* punishments. And, of course, all go to hell.

In other words, as the Qur'ân makes clear, *kufr* and *nifâq* are indissolubly linked. And as Sâlim (§31) states: God did not extend the treatment of the *munâfiqûn* to any other *kuffâr*. The problem is that the term *nifâq* covers a multitude of sins, literally, great and small, of omission and commission. The *munâfiq* is the one who enters something and leaves because he thinks he knows better, who has entered Islam by the main door, but through his deceit, rebellion against the true religion, leaves by the side door, a simile favoured in the early Ibâḍi literature. Thus, in later adumbrations by the likes of Ibn Baraka, al-Bisyâni, and al-'Awtabi, we find there is something of a sense that *nifâq* is an internal matter, a moral problem, of the heart (*qalb*). This perhaps explains the shift from *nifâq* to the associated notion of *kufr* that Muḥammad al-Nahdi proclaimed. That too was a wide concept, so earlier Ibâḍis (*aṣḥâbuna*), says 'Awtabi in his *Ḍiyâ'*, recognized two kinds of *kufr*, *juḥûd* (negation) and *ni'ma*, though others refuse to recognize this distinction. The former is *kufr* (p.134) *bi'l-tanzîl* (denying that which has been revealed, i.e. *sam'*), the latter *khaṭa' fîl-ta'wîl* (basic error in Qur'ânic interpretation, i.e. deriving from '*aql*') from which people set up their doctrine (*naṣabahu al-nâs dîn<sup>an</sup>*) and call to a false truth; such people he concludes are damned unless they repent and return to the Truth.<sup>16</sup> This statement derives directly from Abû 'Abdullâh, whom he is quoting almost word for word. It is interesting to compare this with the somewhat earlier *Sîra* to the Khurâsânîs (§28),<sup>17</sup> where the distinction is between the *kufr shirk* (a judgement based on *shirk*) and those guilty of *kufr bi'l-a'mâl* (by their deeds): both are *munâfiqûn*. As also to Hûd b. Maḥkam/Muḥakkam, who says in his *Tafsîr* that the *kufr* of the *ahl al-Kitâb* is *kufr juḥûd* deriving from *shirk* whilst the *kufr* of the *ahl al-iqrâr* is *kufr nifâq* deriving from *tark shukr al-ni'ma* (not manifesting gratitude for God's grace), it is *kufr dûna kufr wa zulm dûna zulm wa fisq dûna fisq*, a statement originally attributed by Ṭawûs (d. 106) to Ibn 'Abbâs.<sup>18</sup>

This distinction in *kufr* does not seem, however, to be peculiar to the Ibâḍis, as Crone and Zimmermann show. *Kufr ni'ma* presumably derives from the Qur'ânic *A lam tara alladhîn baddalû ni'mat Allâh kufr<sup>an</sup>*, but the evidence they assemble shows it was used by others, including most 'moderate' (i.e. non-Azâriqa) Khârijites, and interestingly enough, according to Baghdâdi, the Najdiyya to designate grave sinners within their own ranks. So we may assume that there was some currency for this classification from early on. Further support for contemporary use of different terms comes from the fact that it was apparently Wâsil b. 'Aṭâ' (d. 131/748-9) who persuaded 'Amr b. 'Ubayd (d. c. 144/761), both members of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri's school and founding figures in Mu'tazilism, that *munâfiq* was an overworked term and that the Muslim guilty of a grave sin condemned to eternal hell was more appropriately designated by the Qur'ânic term *fâsiq*.<sup>19</sup> Once again, it may well be that there was a division within the Ibâḍi school itself, which periodically surfaced in disputes between the more conservative early Ibâḍi '*ulamâ'* in Oman and what they considered the rather tainted views imported from Basra by Abû 'Abdullâh (see Chapter 9). Thus, whilst Abû'l-Mu'thir is grinding on with *nifâq*, his contemporary

Bashîr (Abû 'Abdullâh's son), who guided the Omanis in the aftermath of the Caliphate invasion, is using *kufr ni'ma* as a basic concept in his *K. al-Muḥâraba*. As, for example, that although irresolution (*shâkk*) as a solution to a disputed problem was polytheism, someone who practised it was not a polytheist but guilty of *kufr al-ni'ma*. In other words, the error is *shirk*, but one guilty of it is in *kufr al-ni'ma*.

**(p.135)** Certainly the term *fâsiq* becomes fully embraced by the Ibâḍis and dissociated from any Mu'tazili taints in due course. Essentially there was no distinction between *munâfiqûn* and *fâsiqûn*, as the *Sîra* to the Khurâsânîs also shows (§28): they are so called because they *fusûq* God's commands, and are quite distinct from the *ahl al-manzila bayn al-manzilatayn* (§30). Before that, however, the *Sîra* has also explained (§29) that the *kâfirûn* are the *ẓâlimûn wa'l-fâsiqûn*, which seems to imply a degree of active leading astray. So we find those who commit the sin of setting up a false doctrine, as described by Abû'l-Mu'thir above, were designated as *fussâq*, corrup-tors, like Iblîs. Thus, in the *fuqahâ*'s letter, Najda b. 'Arnir is designated a *fâsiq* with his own '*sîra*',<sup>20</sup> while in Qalhâti's *Maqâma* celebrating the return of the Kilwans from extremist Shi'i doctrine to the true way, the poem starts with the *qawl al-fâsiq* followed by the Ibâḍi missionary's *jawâb li-qawl al-fâsiq* (see Chapter 14). But while some tried to make out that the *fâsiq* was neither *mu'min* nor *kâfir*, al-Bisyâni absolutely rejects this, quoting the Qur'ânic injunction that either one was *shâkir* or in *kafûr*. There was no third way as the Mu'tazila claimed.

All this is a long way from Sâlim b. Dhakwân, who operates with *nifâq* alone and in whose epistle the term *fâsiqûn* only arises in Qur'ânic quotation. Sâlim bases virtually all his argument on Qur'ânic quotation. As such he is irreproachable in the Muḥakkima tradition. But it leaves room for further interpretation. What all this discussion about degrees and species of *kufr* shows, is that the Ibâḍis elaborated basic concepts without actually refuting their predecessors (*aṣḥâbuna*). There is no contradiction in the terms used, and at the end of the day it all boiled down to two matters. The first was how to deal with the *ahl al-baghy* and *jabâbira*,<sup>21</sup> active Muslim opponents of the Ibâḍi community. That led to a huge range of rulings that were the product both of principles and historic experience. The essential, however, was laid down from the start: no *ghanîma* nor *sibâ* in warfare with other Muslims, however deviant they might be. The second was the attitude to be taken to others who rejected or failed to live up to the standards of the Ibâḍi *dîn*. Basically their penalty was paid in the afterlife, and in the present by dissociation (*barâ'a*).

All of which also shows that Sâlim's epistle is pretty early, 'primitive' even. Evidence perhaps that, while not as early as Cook suggests, it is not as late as Crone and Zimmermann propose. But we can leave that aside until the next chapter. What matters is that we have here an example of how Ibâḍism 'evolved'.

More to the point for understanding the birth of Ibâḍism and the **(p.136)** Khawârij in general post-64 is when should one 'go out'? It is in this that the Ibâḍis were accused of being too soft, and why it is that Abû Bilâl Mirdâs, a survivor from Nahrawân, who seceded in 61/680 from the tyrannical government of 'Ubaydallâh b. Ziyâd, but to whose call the quietists (*qa'ada*) failed to respond, came to represent the ideal. His martyrdom is the paradigm for the prototype *shâri*, a

---

term used from the beginning for the Muslim hero who sells his life for the cause. 'I am the *shâri*, who has made a contract for his soul: he wakes in the morning hoping for death in the good fight after the model of Mirdâs', versified the 5/11<sup>th</sup>-century Hadrami Imam, Abû Ishâq Ibrâhîm b. Qays, in his *Dîwân*.

### Muḥakkima Roots

#### Şiffin

It is this shift of emphasis to *shirâ'*, sharply brought to the fore by the dogma of the Azâriqa, that fundamentally defines the activation of what might be termed the proto-Ibâḍis into a recognizable political movement. So it is with this active opposition in mind that that we shall first trace the forerunners of Ibâḍism up to the conventional date of 64 AH. The *fuqahâ'*s' letter to the Imam al-Şalt, along with other similar lists, is instructive over which secessions formed the right sort of precedent. It starts with those who were at Nahrawân under their Imam 'Abdullâh b. Wahb al-Râsibi. The next is Nukhayla under their Imam al-Ḥawthara b. Wadda', which was dealt with by Mu'âwiya, helped by 'Ali's son al-Ḥasan. Three rather minor *khurûj* are then cited, a man called Faraḥim; Ziyâd b. Ḥarrâsh of Kûfa; and Tamîm b. Maslama and his followers from a village in the Sawâd of Kûfa. Then follows a major revolt of al-A'raj, the Ḥarurite. After which comes the first Basran revolt under Ṭawwâf, who was killed by 'Ubaydallâh b. Ziyâd, followed by Qarîb and Zaḥḥâf, who were also both killed, and then finally Abû Bilâl.

The general history of the dispute between 'Ali and Mu'âwiya leading to Şiffin in 37/647, the agreement by 'Ali to accept arbitration, and the secession of the Khawârij ending in Nahrawân and Nukhayla are too well known to need repeating here. What matters for us is the Muḥakkima point of view, represented initially by the Kûfan *qurrâ'* 'who afterwards became Khawârij' and which is explained well by Hinds.<sup>22</sup> The raising of the *maşâhif* by the Syrians on their spears at Şiffin at Mu'âwiya or 'Amr b. al-'Aş's instigation, for whom things were going badly, was aimed at splitting the Iraqî confederation that 'Ali had managed to put together. **(p.137)** (It should be noted it was not a new gesture: 'Ali had placed one of the 'Abd al-Qays bearing a Qur'ân between the two sides to try and stop the battle being enjoined at the Camel.) As far as the *qurrâ'*, who represented the old *sâbiqa* interests as established by 'Umar, were concerned, they were not particularly strong supporters of 'Ali, and considered the gesture had been a call for the application of *Kitâb Allâh*, and as *Amîr al-Mu'minîn* it was his duty to accept, even though he and the hard core of his supporters wanted to continue the fight. Their rather ingenuous understanding, according to Hinds, was that a peace would be made whereby 'Ali would return to Madina as *Amîr al-Mu'minîn*, confine himself to the applications of the prescriptions of *Kitâb Allâh*, and leave the Iraqis and Syrians to their own devices.

It was not they however, who were the deciding party that pushed 'Ali to accept, but rather the bulk of the Kûfan forces who, under their clan leaders, with al-Ash'ath al-Kindi to the fore, were lukewarm towards him and had no desire to become drawn into a major civil war with the Syrians and particularly their fellow Yamanis: the memory of the Battle of the Camel only a few months earlier must still have been fresh. Rabî'a, perhaps 'Ali's staunchest supporters, were divided while Mâlik b. al-Ashtar al-Nakhâ'i of Madhḥij, who had been the leader of the first *qurrâ'* to revolt against 'Uthmân's governor in Kûfa, along with the leaders of Ṭayy, and



Khuzâ'a, and al-Aḥnaf b. Qays of Sa'd Tamîm were against, and Sa'îd b. Qays al-Hamdâni, the leader of the other major Yaman tribe at Kûfa, wavered.<sup>23</sup> The terms of the arbitration as agreed, however, were very far from what these *qurrâ'* had anticipated, even though it was their representatives who negotiated that procedure would be based purely on the Qur'ân. Just as those who had advised 'Ali against negotiations had realized, the whole thing was a trick to gain time and wrong-foot him. In the first place there was no mention of his being *Amîr al-Mu'minîn* in the protocol, while the terms of reference were not just *Kitâb Allâh*, but also something rather vaguely described as '*al-sunna al-'âdila al-ḥasana al-jâmi'a ghayr al-mufarriqa*'. The implication was that the *Kitâb Allâh* was an insufficient base to make a *ṣulḥ* while the *sunna* was not even referred to as *sunnat al-nabî*; it even possibly referred to a phrase found in connection with pre-Islamic alliances. In the second place, while the Syrians got their own man, the wily and ruthless 'Amr b. al-'Âṣ, as their representative, 'Ali ceded to pressure from the two Iraqî *qurrâ'* and al-Ash'ath, who considered his proposal of 'Abdullâh b. 'Abbâs as both insufficiently impartial and also making two Muḍar arbitrators in an affair that was largely a Yamani confrontation. But al-Ash'ath was certainly not going to have his rival (Mâlik b.) al-Ashtar al-Nakhâ'i selected, and finally **(p.138)** accepted Abû Mûsâ al-Ash'ari, who in the past had sometimes exhibited a rather ambivalent attitude to 'Ali and was certainly no match for 'Amr. It was al-Ash'ath also who persuaded 'Ali to give way to Mu'âwiya's objection over retaining 'Ali's title in the agreement, a concession al-Aḥnaf b. Qays strongly advised against. Furthermore, the Syrians were now trying to extend the agreement to examine the legality of 'Uthmân's killing in the light of *Kitâb Allâh*, something about which the *qurrâ'* had absolutely no doubt (the arbitration did find it illegal).

The first people to raise the *lâ ḥukm* cry were reputedly two young brothers of the 'Anaza contingent in 'Ali's army when al-Ash'ath made the circuit of both the Syrian forces (who all accepted) and 'Ali's troops to read out the accord, and precipitated themselves at the Syrians, the first Khârîji martyrs. The Bâjila also objected, while 'Urwa b. Ḥudayr (Abu Bilâl's brother, see below) sprang forward when it came to Tamîm and struck at him, causing fury amongst the Yamani who had to be propitiated by al-Aḥnaf and other tribal leaders.<sup>24</sup> The *lâ ḥukm* cry, Veccia Vaglieri (1949) states, should be interpreted as, 'nobody is entitled to give his judgment when God has already ordained a law'. And it is this principle that leads Shahrastâni to call the early Khawârij Muḥakkima. However, I would go further than that. While the *lâ ḥukm* principle was clearly enunciated at Şiffîn, the role of *Kitâb Allâh*, whose text had been established in the time of 'Uthmân and whose own rule had betrayed its precepts, must already have become an issue of fundamental importance. One example will suffice: during the confrontation with 'Uthmân, his third sermon was interrupted by the cry 'Act in accordance with the Book of God'.<sup>25</sup> The first three of the Prophet's successors had largely governed by personal judgement, and *fiqh* had similarly been a matter of *ra'y* (opinion).<sup>26</sup> But as dissatisfaction with 'Uthmân's rule grew, so the need for a more rigorous approach became apparent, *a fortiori* during the Caliphate of 'Ali, who was accused of introducing '*ḥadîths*'. For the purists, the Qur'ân was the Constitution of the Islamic state and the *qurrâ'* were its guardians. The Prophet's *sunna* was not a part of that Constitution, far less an 'Amendment', merely an adjunct, of value only in so far as it helped illuminate God's Word. When the Azraqî leader, Qatari b. Fujâ'a, established himself as *Amîr al-Mu'minîn* he inscribed his coins with the *lâ ḥukm* phrase<sup>27</sup> to assert that fundamental principle, and it is interesting to note that the poet 'Abîda b. Hilâl refers to Qatari's followers as

*aṣḥâb al-Qur'ân*, which might be translated as 'Unconditionals of the Qur'ân'.<sup>28</sup> All Khâriji sects subscribed to this absolutely central role of the Qur'ân as **(p.139)** defining the *ḥukm* of the true Islamic state, and in my opinion the origins of the movement lie not in Şifḥin but in the debate highlighted in 'Uthmân's time of what the constitution of the state was. Which is one of the reasons the Ibâḍis are totally and absolutely uncompromising over any revisionist approach to 'Uthmân's sins.

#### Nahrawân and Nukhayla

Be that as it may, the official birth of the Ibâḍi/Khawârij resulted from the fact that after the Şifḥin agreement (autumn 37/648) a group, variously given as 2,000, 10,000, or 12,000,<sup>29</sup> from 'Ali's followers seceded to the village of Ḥarûrâ' (whence the grammatically somewhat incorrect *nisba* frequently used of Ḥarûri pl. Ḥarûriyya<sup>30</sup>) and agreed to defer selecting a new leader by a *shûrâ* until after victory. Their basic rationale was that by negotiating with the Muslim community's enemy 'Ali had deposed himself. It is easy to brand these Ḥarurites as fanatics, but in fact many were prepared to be conciliatory, and Baghdâdi states that 8,000 of the 12,000 were won back by 'Ali during the year that preceded the great Khâriji martyrdom of Nahrawân.<sup>31</sup> While 'Ali himself was very much involved in trying to settle matters, his main negotiator, sympathetic towards the secessionists, was 'Abdullâh Ibn 'Abbâs, whom he had originally wanted to be his representative in the arbitration. Ibn 'Abbâs, as we shall see, came to stand at the head of the Ibâḍi chain of forebears, which continues with Jâbir b. Zayd.

The hard-core opposition to the arbitration now chose as their 'Imam' (in fact *Amîr*), 'Abdullâh b. Wahb al-Râsibi, and finally decided to secede to Jisr al-Nahrawân and invite the Basrans of the same mind to join them there. In the meantime 'Ali had rejected the arbitration at Dûmat al-Jandal and was raising an army from Kûfa and Basra to march against Syria. So he now approached the secessionists saying that the arbitrators had failed to act in accordance with the Qur'ân and Sunna and calling on them to join the common fight against Mu'âwiya. This they rejected, arguing that he was not standing for principles but for himself; however, if he made a proper *tawba* (repentance) they would reconsider. As a result of some murders by the Khârijites and the killing of the envoy 'Ali sent to investigate, his men called on him to deal with the rebels, since they could not leave their families behind under threat from such fanatics, and he received the strong backing of al-Ash'ath, who preferred fighting them to **(p.140)** the Syrians, all the more so since there were few Yamanis among them. In the end 'Ali had no alternative and the result was a foregone conclusion, more of a suicide by the Khawârij than a battle.

In fact this secession was far from the monolithic uprising the Ibâḍis would lead us to believe ('Abdullâh b. Yazîd al-Fazâri seems to be the main source for the Ibâḍi traditions concerning Nahrawân<sup>32</sup>). Although Nahrawân was the main battle, the belligerent Khawârij did not all unite under Ibn Wahb's banner, while before the battle some went over to 'Ali and others withdrew. Perhaps 1,500 to 1,800 out of 4,000 stood up to 'Ali's forces, numbering, it is said, 14,000.<sup>33</sup> The battles against scattered groups continued until the beginning of Mu'âwiya's reign, when another important battle, also accorded martyrdom status by the Ibâḍis, took place at Nukhayla against a group of 2,000 Khawârij from Kûfa who, it is specifically stated, had not been at Nahrawân.<sup>34</sup> However disunited the original Khawârij might have been, political movements need their icons, and for the Ibâḍis these first Muḥakkima are treated as a unified group and the

memory of Nahrawân and Nukhayla represents the first persecution of their movement. Qalhâti even goes so far as to say that the Wahbiyya-Ibâḍi are the sole Khâriji group to trace their movement right back to Ibn Wahb, whom they recognize as their first Imam after 'Ali and from whom the term Wahbiyya originates. It is a claim the so-called Sufriyya would have hotly challenged: and as we shall see, Wahbiyya much more likely derives from the dispute that gave rise to the important Nukkâr schism which affected all Ibâḍis over the succession of 'Abd al-Wahhâb b. 'Abd al-Rahmân in the Rustamid Imamate. Perhaps to reinforce this piece of legerdemain, Ibn Wahb, who was probably a Bâjîla *mawlâ*, is instead incorporated into the Râsib, who were one of the earliest Omani contingents to participate in the wars of conquest, and Râsib in one genealogical variant is even given Azdi origins.

However, Nahrawân and Nukhayla are more than a simple martyrdom. They represent the end of the true Islamic state, the crushing by the secularly ambitious and the misguided of those who upheld the *dîn*. Thus the Ḥarûriyya comprised not only the *Qurrâ'* (which, whatever the term's origins, means Qur'ânic readers to them), but many of the *Anṣâr* and the *Muhâjirûn*. At Nahrawân it is claimed that no less than seventy of those who fought at the Prophet's side in the Battle of Badr fell with the Muḥakkima. In other words, the Ibâḍis confirm Hinds's thesis, that the issue was fundamentally defence of 'Umar's *sâbiqa* order at Kûfa. They have adopted the Kûfans' views concerning 'Uthmân's betrayal of **(p.141)** the Muslim trust, even though Basra itself had been largely pro-'Uthmân. In the catalogue of misdeeds<sup>35</sup> as adumbrated in (supposedly) Ibn Ibâḍ's letter to the Caliph 'Abd al-Malik (IB 1) is added to the general charge of the Hijazis misappropriating the wealth of the community and exploiting the non-Hijazis, the accusation that 'Uthmân prevented the people of 'Urnân and al-Baḥrayn, that is, of the Gulf, from selling their agricultural produce before the state had realized its own.

That can only refer to dates. Dried dates, have always been the principal export of Oman and the Hasa region, where the surplus (basically sugars) provide the exchange for the main food requirement, grain. The real problem would have been the competition for the lower-grade Batina dates on the Iraqi market by similar poor-quality dates collected as tax from the Shatt al-Arab region, but doubtless the precedence accorded the state's sale also affected the trade for high-quality dates produced within the main oases in the interior of both Bahrayn and Oman. A further specifically Ibâḍi accusation, as already noted, comes in Sâlim b. Dhakwân's epistle that 'Uthmân excluded the bedouin because he did not want them to have a share in the stipends (*'aṭâ'*).

This shift of the emphasis to 'Uthmân as the man who had first betrayed the Muslims is also convenient for other reasons. In the first place it provides precedent in the Ibâḍi theory of *walâya* and *barâ'a*, which we will be discussing more fully. It shows the fundamental duty of the Muslim to dissociate from the unjust Imam who persists in his errors and refuses to make a *tawba* when confronted. 'Ali, by contrast, was in his *walâya* and it was he himself who reneged his rightful authority by submitting his Imamate to arbitration by other than *Kitâb Allâh*. The only reason the Muḥakkima dissociated from him was that he had allowed himself to be tricked by their common enemies: many of the Khawârij were ready to come to terms, and it was only the hard core who continued to resist him. The Ibâḍis represent the Khawârij as a peaceable group who had seceded under their own Imam and only asked to be left alone. Whence a later

elaboration that Ibn Wahb was the prototype *difâ'i* Imam, that is, 'defending' his community. They were quite prepared for 'Ali to join them so long as he recognized Ibn Wahb as his Imam! It was the extremist supporters of 'Ali, the Râfiḍa and the Kûfans, who were responsible for Nahrawân, an interpretation that also finds some support in classical sources.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, the Ibâḍis claim, 'Ali came to regret Nahrawân. Mu'âwiya, on the other hand, knew exactly what he was doing. Did he not immediately recognize the danger of the principles for **(p.142)** which the Khawârij stood and therefore offer to go and fight them on 'Ali's behalf?

Such a compromising view offered a tentative olive branch to the Shi'a and the possibility of making common ground against their common enemy, the Umayyads. It was an attitude that the extremists totally rejected, as witness 'Imrân b. al-Ḥittân's verses extolling the Khârijī who avenged Nahrawân by murdering 'Ali. In other words, the nascent split in Khârijism, which finally came into the open apparently in 64, was there from the start. The Azâriqa simply took the extremists' point of view to a logical conclusion, whilst the Ibâḍis were for compromise with the aim of holding the Islamic community together. A possibility that might also be borne in mind is that by emphasizing the role of 'Uthmân in breaking the original Muslim community they were able to discuss certain principles without actually having to cite the Umayyads.

However, such moderation had its limits, for overriding all was the essential principle of the *lâ ḥukm illâ lillâh*, which is what united the Muḥakkima. Whatever the limited interpretation of the term *ḥukm* (law, judgement, arbitration) as applied to the proceedings arising from Ṣiffīn, *ḥukm* soon came to take on the all-embracing connotations of government. This is apparent from IB 2, where Ibn Ibâḍ wrote: '[T]hey [the Shi'a] abandoned the *ḥukm* of their Lord and took *aḥâdîth* for their religion: they claimed to have obtained knowledge other than from the Qur'ân ... They believed in a book which was not from God, written by the hands of men; they then attributed it to the Apostle of God ...'<sup>37</sup> That reflects the original Khârijī rejection of the '*al-sunna al-âdila al-ḥasana al-jâmi'a ghayr al-mufarriqa*' of the arbitration agreement as being *taḥkim al-rijâl fī dīn* Kitâb Allâh. What we see here is the very fundamentalist view of the Ibâḍis inherited from the Muḥakkima party that *lâ ḥukm illâ lillâh* means the Qur'ân, all of it and nothing but it! This is clearly brought out time and again by the early Ibâḍis, from Sâlim b. Dhakwân's (§4) 'it is through this Qur'ân alone that you have been commanded', to Abû Ḥamza in his sermon at Madina, as too by the great proponent of the Nizwâ party, Abû Sa'îd al-Kudami, who sought to reunite the Omanis after the traumas of the civil war. In his *Mu'tabar* commenting on the first major Omani compendium of Ibâḍi *fiqh*, the *Jâmi' Ibn Ja'far*, he issues a caution concerning the criteria used by Ibn Ja'far for making *fatâwâ*, 'that no man may issue such judgements unless he knows what is in the Book of God, the *sunna* of his Prophet and the *âthâr* of the first Imams', to the effect that 'the *sunna*, all of it, is what illuminates (*ta'wîl*) God's Book, in the same way as the *ijmâ'* is what explains God's Book ... and the opinion of the *ahl al-ra'y* of the (true) Muslims, extracting argument from intelligence **(p.143)** (*yukhraj ḥujja min al-ma'qûl*) confirms that the Truth, all of it, and that knowledge (*'ilm*), all of it, is from the Qur'ân'. So we can see why, according to the *Bayân al-Shar'* of Muḥammad b. Ibrâhîm al-Kindi dealing with the ceremony of electing and swearing in of the Imam, the phrase *lâ ḥukm illâ lillâh* is pronounced three times.

Thus, for the Ibâḍis, what is inherited from the original Muḥakkima movement provides their essential legitimacy, the absolute fundamentals of their *dīn*. It also incorporates a total rejection

---

of 'Uthmân's final years of rule, as too, somewhat regretfully, 'Ali, after Şiffin. Implicitly and explicitly Mu'âwiya's attempt to found a quasi-monarchical dynasty<sup>38</sup> was illegitimate. 'I give you allegiance on (the conditions of the prescriptions) of *Kitâb Allâh wa sunnat nabîyhi*', stated Sa'id b. al-Aswad. You may make no conditions, replied Mu'âwiya. 'And you, no allegiance to you', retorted Sa'id.<sup>39</sup> That illegitimacy was compounded by a tyrannical rule, notably through the Umayyad governors in Iraq, Ziyâd b. Abîhi and his son 'Ubaydallâh, and later Hajjaj.

It will be noted that all the first six legitimate *khurûj* listed by the *fuqahâ'* were essentially Kûfan. As Hinds<sup>40</sup> has shown by an examination of the tribal names of the groups involved, almost all came from central and north-eastern Arabia and most were from Bakri and Tamîmi clans whose home territory had been close to or adjoined Iraq. In so far as 'Ali had Basran support, it came from a similar background, and it is relevant to note that at one stage al-Aḥnaf b. Qays proposed himself as 'Ali's *hakam*, unacceptable to the Kûfans. Tribally, therefore, the early Khawârij were from non-Yaman tribes and in the case of the Basrans the Tamîm represented the Azd's principal enemies. The Azd of Basra had been more or less sympathetic to 'Uthmân and anti-'Ali at the Battle of the Camel, and in due course became strong supporters of the Zubayrids. In other words, the Omanis politically were either neutral or opposed to the original Khawârij, in so far as they were concerned at all by the movement.

The first specifically Basran revolts by Khawârij of the right sort according to the *fuqahâ'*'s letter were two fairly trivial affairs that followed on shortly after Nahrawân and Nukhayla, and indeed it is not even entirely clear that they were Basran. Ibn Sallâm,<sup>41</sup> writing at roughly the same time in the Maghrib, states that the first Basran (proto-Ibâḍi) revolt was that of the Tamîmi Abû Bilâl. Certainly, the bulldozing of the existing tribal order into *akhmâs* was at the root of a number of *khurûj* of the wrong sort, by bands of tribal discontents and robbers waving the Khâriji banner, and the firm way they were dealt with by Ziyâd b. Abîhi generally met with approval, notably by Abû Bilâl himself. However, **(p.144)** 'Ubaydallâh was not content to deal with these marauding bands and started a positive campaign against the Khawârij in general, and it was that which finally led Abû Bilâl to abandon his quietist stance and withdraw, the last rightly guided secession for nearly seven decades.

#### Abû Bilâl Mirdâs<sup>42</sup>

Abû Bilâl Mirdâs b. (Ḥudayr) b. Udayya, an extremely rich man, was like his brother, 'Urwa, one of the original Muḥakkima who had been at Nahrawân. His brother seems to have been the firebrand, the first to draw his sword at the battle, but had thereafter remained quiescent (*qâ'id*) until questioned by Ziyâd, who executed him after having first cut off his arms and legs and then his tongue before blinding him because of his continued condemnation of 'Uthmân and replying that both Mu'âwiya and he were corrupt.<sup>43</sup> Doubtless this barbarous behaviour against his brother strongly influenced Abû Bilâl, but it was 'Ubaydallâh's campaign against all the Khawârij, combined with his arbitrary and ruthless government, which finally stirred him into action. After consulting by letter with his friend Jâbir b. Zayd, then apparently living at his native village of Firq in Oman, according to the *Kashf*, he decided to secede in 61/680, that is, the same year that saw the 'martyrdom' of Ḥusayn b. 'Ali (10 Muḥarram). Having failed to stir the *qa'ada* to join him, he stole away in the middle of the night with a group of forty Tamîmis from his *dâr* in Basra to Ahwâz, where he remitted 100,000 dinars worth of tax on the

inhabitants of the Basâk area, keeping only the 'aṭâ' due to his followers. With their support he was able to defeat an army of 2,000 sent against him by 'Ubaydallâh, whereupon he issued another call to the *qa'ada* to join him, cross over to Oman, and from there take possession of Mecca as 'Shahm (Sahm?) b. Ghâlib' had done.<sup>44</sup> It is important to note that the *K. Abi Sufyân*, from which this basic account derives, emphasizes, with the object of showing that this was the right kind of secession, that Abû Bilâl was not calling for a *hijra*, nor did he claim that his were the only true believers (*lâ yad' ûna hijrat an wa lâ yantaḥilûnahâ*). In other words, he was not condemning the *qa'ada* as such. Alarmed at the growing menace of his movement, 'Ubaydallâh sent another force, this time of 3,000-4,000, under 'Abbâd b. al-Akhḍar, who surrounded and massacred Abû Bilâl's followers whilst at prayer. It was this revolt and the failure to respond to it (p.145) that revitalized the whole Khâriji movement,<sup>45</sup> leading to the flirtation with Ibn Zubayr and finally the Azâriqa secession. The *qa'ada* could no longer live in the Umayyad state with a clear conscience, unless they could justify their inaction.

It is, however, worth noting, as Dr Al-Salmi has pointed out to me, that according to al-Mubarrad many individuals and nascent movements see Abû Bilâl as their prototype hero, and this should be borne in mind as these groups take more recognizable political form (in the same way, I suggest that the Ibâḍis claim Abû Bilâl's contemporary, Jâbir b. Zayd, as specifically theirs: see next chapter). So, the Mu'tazila considered Abû Bilâl as theirs, on much the same grounds as did the proto-Ibâḍis: that of opposing (*munkir*) the *jawr* of the Sultan and only making his *khurûj* after telling Ziyâd he was wrong in what he preached from the *minbar* (in other words, calling him to the true *da'wa*). The Shi'a actually claim Abû Bilâl wrote to Ḥusayn b. 'Ali saying he was not of the Khâriji view and that 'Ali had pursued the correct *dîn*. Be that as it may, we can certainly see in Abû Bilâl's secession certain features which characterize virtually all the early Khâriji uprisings, including those of the wrong type.

#### Khâriji revolts of the wrong type: Khirrîṭ b. Râshid

The prototype is that of a Basran Omani, Khirrîṭ b. Rashid al-Nâji, who seceded from 'Ali after Ṣiffin, but from the Muḥakkima point of view, for the wrong reason.<sup>46</sup> After fighting for 'Ali at the Battle of the Camel he had gone with him to Kûfa with some 300 followers. But after the arbitration agreement he broke with him, on the grounds that as *Amîr al-Mu'minîn* he had surrendered his prerogatives as ordained by *Kitâb Allâh*. Or at least, according to Ṭabari, that appears to have been his initial position. But subsequently, when trying to win over followers, he also claimed that 'Ali had not accepted the decision of the *ḥakam* when it found against him. But in any case, it was not the view of the *qurrâ'*, 'who afterwards became Khawârij', and who had pressed 'Ali to submit to arbitration. But that is really as far as the differences go, except that when Khirrîṭ seceded he returned to Basra before withdrawing to Ahwâz, whereas the Kûfan Khawârij operated in the Sawâd. And right or wrong, a number of Khawârij did in due course join him. Eventually 'Ali's forces, which were reinforced by a Basran contingent under a Ṭâ iy sent by Ibn (p.146) 'Abbâs, drove the rebels into Fârs and finally into their homeland in northern Oman, where eventually they were defeated.

Four initial points may be made. The first thing to note is that Khirrîṭ and his immediate followers were small in numbers. He initially broke away with a hundred or so, but after his defeat at al-Madâ'in and his move to Ahwâz he was joined by the rest of his tribal followers,

bringing their number to 300. The second is that he was simply a tribal leader, and neither attempted to be recognized as an Imam nor select one. What he wanted was consultation (*shûrâ*), and when an Imam acceptable to the community as a whole was chosen, then he would join him. In other words, he was separating provisionally. The third was that his B. Nâjiyya were largely bedouin. That might be a further indication of the general prejudice against the bedu and that 'Uthmân had even excluded them from the 'aṭâ'. On the other hand, the B. Nâjiyya had made up one of the Omani contingents that joined the first campaigns in Fârs. So even if Khirrîr's leadership there is a back projection, the fact remains they had established position as a clan of some standing in Basra, in the 'Âliya *khums*. The fourth point of note is rather less clear. But it seems that after Khirrîr was driven from the Persian coast and took refuge in his homeland in northern Oman (where he killed 'Ali's governor<sup>47</sup>), he attracted a considerable number of Christians who had converted to Islam but now began apostatizing, and that seems to include both members of his own tribe and the 'Abd al-Qays. Perhaps not surprising, when it is remembered that their conversion to Islam was less than a generation old, and that in the light of the Islamic community's instability, many might well consider that they had made a mistake.

However, the principal point of interest is that Khirrîr established what might be considered the prototype Khârîji revolt emanating from Basra. All were initially small in number, yet were relatively successful. Khirrîr started with 100-140 followers, Abû Bilâl with forty, Nâfi' b. al-Azraq's original band was small, and as we shall see in the next chapter, Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq's sensational success was with pretty small numbers. Even Nahrawân and Nukhayla were probably less sizeable than the impression given in the Ibâḍi sources, whilst virtually all the other Kûfan Khârîji revolts were formed around a small nucleus.

The essential secret was that Khirrîr was able to win over a following from the underprivileged classes and establish his band in a territorial base with the support of the local inhabitants, first Ahwâz and then in Oman. Much of Arabia, of course, was remote from central government authority, and one of the most successful and long-lived Khârîji revolts was that of Najda and his successors, who broke with the Azâriqa in (p.147) south-west Persia and established themselves in the Ḥanîfa tribal territory in Yamâma for several decades. Oman too was remote, until Hajjaj finally stopped this bolt-hole for Khârîji dissidents. Ahwâz and Fârs were also sufficiently far away to provide a secure base, at least for some considerable time, whereas the Kûfans were much closer to central government authority in the Sawâd. But the support for Khirrîr, like Abû Bilâl and Nâfi' later,<sup>48</sup> came from the fact that they remitted the *kharâj* of the peasant classes and other of the 'ulûj who had borne the brunt of the tax obligations imposed by the new rulers in the former Sasanid territories. Whilst many of the *dahâqîn* and *asâwira* had come to terms with the Arabs, and indeed often prospered as they were assimilated amongst the *muqâtila*, it was the ordinary villagers who had to pay for this accommodation. The peasants had always formed an exploited class, but their discontent was heightened by insecurity in the countryside, where the old order had been overthrown and no new regime capable of sustaining and investing in agricultural production had replaced it (true also of Egypt). Many had clung to their old religions, peasant-wise (cf. *pagus*), while for others the conversion to Islam hung light. It is significant that whilst Khirrîr's Arab followers escaped relatively lightly when he was eventually defeated by an army sent over from Persia, exemplary punishment was meted out to those subject people who had sought to break their tax obligations. It is generally said that it was Hajjaj who imposed the principle that conversion did not free the land of the *kharâj* and that

the peasants were tied to cultivating it, even branding those who had joined Ibn al-Ash'ath with the names of their villages,<sup>49</sup> but in fact he was only dealing with the growing problem of urban drift affecting tax-collection, and was simply reaffirming what had always been the case. Runaway peasants formed part of the early Khâriji bands, and it is more than probable that Khâriji attitudes were responsible for much early conversion of the villagers, likewise in the poor quarters of the towns, as became evident from events in Basra in 64.

Khirrî't's followers also included elements from those whose proclivity to brigandage was notorious amongst the settled peoples of the Fertile Crescent throughout history, bedu raiders from the desert and 'the Curdies, a most thievish people', from the mountains. Coupled to the riff-raff, and unemployed from the towns, it was this sort of following that gave many bands masquerading under the Khâriji banner such a bad reputation that Abû Bilâl was initially prepared to support the strong tactics employed by Ziyâd and 'Ubaydallâh to suppress them.

**(p.148) The Najdiyya**<sup>50</sup>

Although there is no mention of them in Khirrî't's revolt, the slave class, particularly those working on estates, also provided further revolutionary material, as was later to be proved by the Zanj uprisings. They were certainly present in other Khâriji bands, and the example par excellence is provided by Najda b. 'Âmir al-Ḥanafî, a Ḥarurite who after the abortive negotiations with Ibn Zubayr joined with Nâfi' to set up state in Ahwâz. Having broken with the Azâriqa over their extremism, he moved to his tribal homeland where Abû Ṭâlut of the B. Zimmân b. Bakr b. Wâ'il and a number of other Khâriji leaders had established themselves after the flirtation with Ibn Zubayr. There they took possession of an agricultural estate that Mu'âwiya had established with 4,000 slaves, and Abû Ṭâlut divided it up amongst his followers. Shortly after his arrival Najda attacked a caravan en route from Basra to Ibn Zubayr in Mecca and proposed a division of the booty with Abû Ṭâlut, on the assumption that these slaves would get their share. Hearing of this, the slaves deserted to Najda en masse, giving their oath of allegiance as equals and complaining that their former master had treated them as a Caliph treated the peasant class.

Najda now set about expanding his state, first towards Bahrayn and the Khaṭṭ coastal region, where he seems to have had the support of the local Azd and some of the 'Abd al-Qays (though others of the tribe opposed him and were defeated at Qatîf). He then defeated a major force sent by Muṣ'ab b. al-Zubayr from Basra and extended his power northwards to the confines of Basra at al-Kâzîma (Kuwait area), forcing the submission of the Tamîm. 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwân saw an opportunity of bringing Arabia under his sway and tried unsuccessfully to win Najda over by offering to appoint him his governor there. He refused, but even so, their common antipathy to the Zubayrids meant they kept on relatively good terms. Najda then turned his attention southwards and westwards and brought Ṣan'â' and Hadramawt under his control, isolated Ṭâ'if, and, whilst not actually besieging the Holy Cities, cut off their supplies until Ibn 'Abbâs persuaded him otherwise. In 69/688-9 his general, 'Atiyya b. al-Aswad al-Ḥanafî, took control of Oman, where, as we have seen, the population seemed to have welcomed him and turned on the Julandâ brothers who were sharing the rule there.

But already there were strong dissensions amongst his followers, and 'Atiyya broke with him; after failing to re-establish a base in Oman he **(p.149)** crossed over to Kirmân and established



one in Seistan. Finally Najda's lieutenant, Abû Fudayk, murdered him and in turn met his end at Caliphate hands. Sâlim b. Dhakwân (§84) has three resulting sub-sects stemming from 'Aṭīyya, Abû Fudayk, and a rather mysterious Dâwûd,<sup>51</sup> but doctrinally they are of no importance. But as we shall see, that was not the end of Najdiyya influence in the region.

#### Characteristics of early so-called Şufri revolts

The other great grouping of Khâriji revolts 'of the wrong sort' in this period between 64 and the Ibâḍi activation have been designated as Şufri by the heresiographers, a label we shall strongly be calling into question. The major revolt against the newly appointed Hajjaj was led by Şâliḥ b. Musarriḥ al-Tamîmi, and continued after his death by Shabîb b. Yazîd al-Shaybânî in 76/694. Essentially confined to the Jazîra, this region continued to be subject to several other revolts by the Rabî'a there, but the details need not concern us. Sufficient to note for the moment that the model for these so-called Şufri revolts was Abû Bilâl, and that while the tribes involved were Tamîm and Rabî'a, once the Şufris proper and the Ibâḍis themselves began to activate their fields of action began to overlap.

Nevertheless, wrong or right, these early revolts labelled Şufri formed the only Khâriji activity of any importance for nearly half a century and their influence both regionally and doctrinally could not be ignored. They both prepared the way and also in some measure imposed a social pattern to which the Ibâḍis had to adapt once they started operating in Arabia. The principle of social equality seems to have been particularly strong, and was largely responsible for the success of relatively small bands of tribal Arabs. It is a characteristic of all 'Khâriji' revolts, Azraqî, Najdi, Ibâḍi, Şufri, whether in Khurâsân, Jazîra, Yamâma, Maghrib, or Oman, that all, *mawlâ* and Arab, Persian and nomad, slaves and women, weaver and peasant, fought valiantly under the same banner, Jâḥiẓ observed.<sup>52</sup> It was their religious ideal (*diyâna*) which rendered them equals and led to perfect understanding.

Reading the history of how Najda imposed himself initially in Arabia as the head of the Yamâma Khârijites, one recalls how Sâlim b. Dhakwân (§18) reminds those he addresses that God had sent his Messenger alike to white and black, Arab and non-Arab, freeman and slave, male and female. Najda may be anathema to Sâlim, but one can, nevertheless, see how the concepts of social equality became incorporated into the political (**p.150**) organization of all Khâriji communities and in the notional equality of the electors and their elected Imam. The only legal qualifications that limited choice of leaders concerned personal qualities and certain minimal physical requirements. Race, colour, and birth were theoretically no barrier to selection. Certainly some of the early Khawârij leaders were *mawâli*,<sup>53</sup> and there is even an extreme example of a woman being declared Imam.<sup>54</sup> Such egalitarianism naturally had its limits, as became apparent when Najda's followers started deserting him and declared a preference for an Arab when selecting his successor.<sup>55</sup> All tribes may be equal and the *mawlâ* of the tribe one of them, a fine principle when rebutting Qurashi pretensions to the Caliphate, but in Arabia some tribes are more equal than others, and even the Ibâḍi Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq was not prepared to taint his noble lineage with the blood of a *mawlâ*, however faithful he had been. Similarly in Oman, the structure of the Imamate was essentially based on a balance of traditional authority. No question there of a 'Nabataean' becoming Imam!

Nevertheless, the Omani region was impregnated by the doctrine of these early Khâriji or pseudo-Khâriji groupings, and Ibâḍism, *volens nolens*, had to come to terms with their ethos. So when 'Imrân b. Ḥittân (d. 84/703), the reputed leader of the Ṣufrijs after the collapse of the Shaybânî revolt, took refuge there he found that Abû Bilâl was greatly revered, while both Khirrîṭ and the Najdiyya also certainly left their mark. The groundwork had been laid for the remarkable assimilation that developed between the ex-peasant classes in the Omani villages and the tribesmen under the Imamate.

### Ibn Ibâḍ

So what of the Ibâḍis themselves? Nothing! For the simple reason there were no Ibâḍis. At least, not yet. In the quarter-century from Ṣiffîn to Abû Bilâl there were nine secessions of the right kind, but there-after sixty-seven years passed without a single righteous revolt being recorded! That statement immediately poses the question: then who was Ibn Ibâḍ, described by Qalhâṭî (late 6/12<sup>th</sup> century) as *Imâm al-Muslimîn*, and Shammâkhi as *Imâm al-Taḥqîq*, *'umdat al-sha'b* when the Khawârij first split? And in any case, was not his contemporary Jâbir b. Zayd an Ibâḍi?

**(p.151)** For some time now 'Abdullâh Ibn Ibâḍ, a Basran from the Tamîmi B. Sa'd, has been the focus of attention in European scholarship as a puzzling figure, along with the two extant letters (IB 1 and IB 2) attributed to him. As the eponym of the school that came to be known as Ibâḍis and who classical sources as early as Abû Mikhnaf (d. 147/774) say went to Mecca with the other Khawârij to question Ibn Zubayr and, along with 'Abdullâh b. al-Ṣaffâr, the supposed founder of the Ṣufriyya, subsequently broke with Nâfi' b. al-Azraq in 64, it is somewhat surprising to find that there is no mention of him in the early Ibâḍis sources. Ibn Sallâm, our earliest Maghribi source for the development of the Ibâḍi movement, goes slap into the generation after the Companions of the Prophet with Jâbir b. Zayd, no Ibn Ibâḍ. Although aware that their sect is called Ibâḍiyya by others, the *K. Abi Sufyân* likewise says nothing of him, and the first reference Cook has found to the Ibâḍis designating themselves by this label is in the *Uṣûl al-daynûna* of the Maghribi 'Amrûs al-Fath (d. 280/893-4). Even as late as Ibn Ḥazm (d. 446/1064), the (Nukkarite) Ibâḍis of Spain had never even heard of him. On the other hand, the letter of the Omani *fuqahâ* to the Imam al-Ṣalt, as too Abû'l-Mu'thir's list of 'Imams' from the same period, shows that the classical account of the threefold split in the Khawârij had been generally accepted by then. This has led Cook to believe that the reception of the Ibn Ibâḍ tradition was in the Wahbite mainstream of Ibâḍism to the exclusion of the Nukkarite sectarians. Which in turns means that it cannot be earlier than the Nukkarite schism of the mid-second-century *hijri*. There is a curious piece of evidence that might sustain this. Abû Zakariyyâ' (d. 471/1078) states<sup>56</sup> that after the Imam 'Abd al-Wahhâb established his authority he decided to go on the Hajj, but the Nafûsans dissuaded him for fear of his falling into 'Abbasid hands. So he wrote to the two leading Mashriqî figures of the time, al-Rabî' b. Ḥabîb and Ibn Ibâḍ, asking their advice. Both replied he should not go, with the former saying he should pay a substitute and the latter that a condition of making the pilgrimage was that the route should be safe. Nor do the classical sources throw any more light on Ibn Ibâḍ other than that he distanced himself from the other Khawârij by the concept of *kufr al-ni'ma*, according to Abû Mikhnaf, and also an anonymous source (possibly al-Madâ'ini) in Balâdhuri and Mubarrad (who, it should be remembered, was an Omani in origin and knew a lot about the Khawârij). Yet, as we have seen, this term seems to have been foreign to the early Ibâḍis, who operated with the concept of *nifâq*.

One other matter, stemming, it seems, also from al-Madâ'ini, worth **(p.152)** mentioning with respect to this original 64 schism is that it was Abû Bayhas Hayṣam b. Jâbir al-Ḍubâ'i (executed 94/713), founder of the Bayhasiyya sect, rather than the obscure Ibn al-Ṣaffar (also a Tamîmi of the Ṣarîm b. Muqâ'is clan), who took the intermediary position between Ibn al-Azraq and Ibn Ibâḍ. All of which makes Ibn Ibâḍ, like Ibn al-Ṣaffar, shadows, rather than dominant personalities, *a fortiori* if it is remembered that according to the Ibâḍis themselves, their main early figure was Jâbir b. Zayd. Furthermore, Cook has convincingly shown that neither letter attributed to Ibn Ibâḍ could have been written by him, at least not if his dating is as has generally been accepted (see Chapter 6).

On the other hand, it is difficult to believe he was a complete invention. Madelung (2006) has added further grist to the mill by discovering a reference to him by an *adab* scholar, Abû 'Ubaydallâh al-Marzubâni, in the biography of a Kaysâni Shi'i poet, al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyari, who had been born an Ibâḍi but converted to Shi'ism. 'Abdullâh ibn Ibâḍ thereupon denounced him to the Caliph Mansûr, significantly when he visited Basra, probably in the year 142/749, with the result that he himself ended up in jail, where he died. That places a quite different complexion on the reports, hitherto dismissed as anachronistic, by two late but well-known classical sources, al-Shahrastâni and Qazwîni, who say that 'Abdullâh Ibn Ibâḍ rose in revolt against the Caliph Marwân b. Muḥammad, a rising Shahrastâni associates with that of Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq. And Abû Zakariyyâ's little story seems also to confirm a late dating. Madelung, developing van Ess, goes on to show that Ibn Ibâḍ adopted Mu'tazili doctrine over *qadar* which ran against the mainline doctrine of Abû 'Ubayda and others, but he was too significant a figure to excommunicate. This, he thinks, is why Abû Sufyân does not mention him among the Ibâḍi *shuyûkh*. Following his death, according to Baghdâdi, his followers seceded under one al-Ḥarith b. Mazyad and his short-lived school recognized no other predecessor than he. It would therefore be in their interest to backdate their leader to the original Khâriji split.

Yet, as Crone and Zimermann point out, it is hard to swallow that the rest of the Ibâḍis were happy to take this backslider into the fold and to call themselves Ibâḍis, having learnt of his existence from the Sunnis. Nor does it explain why he was singled out as the founder of a sect that did not identify itself in terms of Qadarism or *kufr al-ni'ma*. Furthermore, there is a very early reference to the name Ibâḍi, which, if genuine, is of the greatest interest. It is a report, seemingly originating with Mulayḥ b. Ḥassân recounted by Abû Ṣufra (Abû Sufyân (al-Rabî' (see next chapter for this chain) that Abu 'Ubayda had met Wâṣil b. 'Aṭâ' (d.131/748-9) on the Hajj and they had argued about *qadar*, Wâṣil saying that 'had I brought him (Abû 'Ubayda) down I would have brought to an **(p.153)** end the Ibâḍiyya' (*law qad qaṭ'atuhu qaṭ'atu al-ibâḍiyya*<sup>57</sup>). That indicates the name was already being used by Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq's time.

There is one other possibility, which occurs in Baghdâdi: that after Nahrawân, nine Khârijis escaped, with two each to Yemen, Seistan, Oman and Jazîra. I had never taken this as other than a rationalization of the distribution of Khâriji activity, and indeed had completely forgotten about it until reminded by al-Mad'aj,<sup>58</sup> who links it with Ibn Ḥawqal's statement that 'Abdullâh b. Ibâḍ and 'Abdullâh b. Wahb die d in the southern Yemeni province of Mudhaykhira, and argues that the minor Khâriji revolt of 'Abbâd al-Ru'ayni in 107/724-6 was Ibâḍi. It really is the most slender evidence, yet it may contain a grain of truth. The Khawârij were from the start highly schismatic, so it is possible that there was a leader of a moderate grouping early established in

Yemen who had the name of 'Abdullâh b. Ibâḍ and that it was from him the name devolved in due course, when the Ibâḍis began to be recognized as a distinctive grouping.

So Ibn Ibâḍ still remains something of a mystery. But whoever or whatever he was, he did not go to Mecca in 64, and the splits in the Khawârij movement that followed Ibn al-Azraq's extremist uprising were evolutions, reacting to his doctrine, with the Ibâḍis being the last school to crystallize and activate as a *da'wa*, sixty or so years after they were supposed to have come into existence. Personally, I still stick to my view that the Ibâḍi label originated in a sort of quasi joke colour classification of the Khawârij, attributing the name of two personalities to describe the two other major schools that supposedly arose in reaction to the Azâriqa, a real colour name. Perhaps, like the term Christian, it was a name that was used by others and finally accepted by them. The Ibâḍis themselves like to consider they descend from the Muḥakkima and fairly early on came to reject strongly the term Khawârij (as too Ḥarûriyya) since it lumped them together with the extremists in popular opinion; and in due course they actually came to use that term pejoratively also. There is nothing intrinsically derogatory about it, as the phrase *khurûj fî jihâd* itself indicates, but since it became associated with the Azâriqa, and the proto-Ibâḍis were in no position yet to call themselves *shurât*, they may well have been glad enough to accept an alternative label, so long as it (p.154) served the purpose of making them reasonably acceptable, which they were in Basra, as Jâḥiẓ and others show to have generally been the case. It was only when the movement activated to create Imamates that they could designate themselves by the name *shurât*, which as a result also tended to be the term used in classical sources.

There is a clue in the *fuqahâ's'* letter<sup>59</sup> with regard to when this move towards activism occurred relative to others, in the chronological list given for the wrong type of Khâriji groups. This runs Najda b. 'Âmir, (Najda b. 'Atiyya<sup>60</sup>), 'Atiyya and Ziyâd al-A'sam (of the withered limb), then Şâlih [b. Musarriḥ], followed by Shabîb [b. Yazîd], Abû Bayhas and 'Abdullâh b. al-Şaffâr in that order. Then come the Şufriyya, the Jahmiyya, and then the Tha'labiyya. That would place the Şufriyya relatively late in the development of the heresy (if indeed heresy, rather than politico-tribal activation, it really was) and quite separate from the Shaybânî revolts of 76-7/694-7 in northern Iraq. That is confirmed by Qalhâtî<sup>61</sup> who states that Shabîb b. Zayd [read Ziyâd] al-Shaybânî was a Bayhasi. If the so-called Şufri activation really did occur after Abû Bayhas's execution near the end of the first century, it would indeed indicate that it was not a great deal before the Ibâḍis themselves moved from quietism to *shirâ'*.

On the whole therefore, I am inclined to the view of Sulaymân al-Bârûni, the Tripolitanian Ibâḍi who lived for some years in Oman in the late 1920s, that 'Abdullâh b. Ibâḍ was merely one of the chiefs of the 'venditori' (*shurât*).<sup>62</sup> The Umayyads used the name as an epithet and gradually it finally displaced that of *shurât*. But at the same time, it must be borne in mind that in Oman, at least, Ibn Ibâḍ and the associated date of 64 for the *tafrîq al-khawârij* has entered the standard account of the origins of Ibâḍism by the end of the First Imamate, even to the point of his being promoted to the status of *Imâm al-Muslimîn* by Abû'l-Mu'thir.

#### Rethink

So if Ibn Ibâḍ is not the founding figure, the focus for investigation obviously switches to Jâbir b. Zayd, the person who features in all Ibâḍi histories as, at least, the 'spiritual' founder of the

movement, the predecessor of Abû 'Ubayda under whom it became an active *da'wa*. And of course if Ibn Ibâḍ was not a contemporary or forerunner of Jâbir, it obviously makes no sense for him to deny being an Ibâḍi. All that Ibn (p.155) Sa'd's emphasis on this refutation<sup>63</sup> shows is that the Ibâḍis *qua* Ibâḍis claimed him, and by doing so he perpetuates the myth about Ibn Ibâḍ being the original leader of the movement.

Everything therefore needs rethinking, *da capo*, including the attribution of the two letters to Ibn Ibâḍ. Except perhaps IB 2. As Cook showed, it is pretty well timeless and all that is clear about it is that it is written to a Shi'i. That would well conform to it having been written by Madelung's apparently historically attested Ibn Ibâḍ who was challenging Shi'i doctrine. But in my opinion Cook's generally plausible thesis that IB 1 was written by Jâbir, probably to one of al-Muhallab's sons, needs further consideration, particularly since it seems to be gaining general acceptance without sufficient notice being taken of his highly pertinent reservations, some of which I will add to when, in the next chapter, Jâbir b. Zayd's place in the origins of Ibâḍism is examined.

So let us start all over again, and go back to the Azâriqa. It is they who cause a split in the Khawârij movement by their extremism. As the *fuqahâ'* stated to the Imam al-Ṣalt; before Nâfi' went wrong the Muslims (i.e. Muḥakkima) were one *da'wa*, the *qâ'id* affiliated with the *khârij* and the *khârij* with the *qâ'id*. The division thus became between the extremist Azâriqa, whose dogma persisted in an increasingly attenuated form with the Najdiyya and their sub-groups on the one hand, and on the other two other groupings: those that continued to pursue active opposition on the *shirâ'* model of Abû Bilâl, and the stay-at-homes, the *qa'ada*. Through a false syllogism that equates all non-Azâriqa-Najdiyya activists with Sufri, coupled to the model that from 64 middle-of-the-way activists were the followers of 'Abdullâh b. al-Ṣaffâr, a wide range of revolts thus became classified as Sufri.

The quietists were even more diverse. Frequently pious people, fervent even, the *qa'ada* were portrayed as being unwilling or too fearful to get off their backsides. Some came to justify their attitude in terms of the unity of the Muslim community, our *qawm*, the *jamâ'at al-Muslimîn*, as exemplified by a reputed saying of the Prophet: 'There will be a civil war (*fitna*) during which the sitter (*qâ'id*) will be better than he who stands, who is better than he who walks, who is better than he who rides; better to be killed than be a slayer.'<sup>64</sup> These are Sâlim b. Dhakwân's *fatana*, who are lambasted along with the Najdiyya and Murji'a. But many understood the need for action, and indeed were willing to do all that they could to help *shirâ'*, financially or morally, provided that they were not actually put into too much danger by doing so. For convenience I have labelled both groupings as Unitarian Khawârij, because their common trait was that they believed in the privileged status of all *ahl al-qibla* as 'our *qawm*'. (p.156) But in fact there was no coherence in this group, no basic doctrine other than that they generally subscribed to the principle of *lâ ḥukm*, although not necessarily clear what that meant; rejected 'Uthmân, while not always condoning his murder; believed 'Ali had been wrong over accepting arbitration, but did not agree over precisely why; and considered the Umayyads a bad lot, except perhaps 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azîz in due course. More to the point, this grouping covered a wide spectrum of social, tribal, and political interests. Which is why even in the heresiographies the Khârijî movement in Basra is represented as being split between a range of schools, with the Ibâḍiyya

as the most moderate. Indeed, 'Awtabi identifies no less than fifteen Khawârij sub-groups, and lists some thirteen or fourteen of them.<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, the 64 AH model dominates accounts and results in oversimplification. Just as it became convenient retrospectively to represent non-Azâriqa-Najdiyya *shurât* of the period as Şufriyya, so after Ibâḍism activated, all previously quietist groupings tended to be subsumed into this third school. Far more important for understanding the development of the Khawârij movements and its divisions is not doctrine, but the tribal and regional dimension.

#### The tribal and regional dimension

As shown, all the earliest important Khawârij revolts 'of the right kind' were from Kûfa and involved tribes living on the borderlands of Iraq, mostly Bakri and Tamîmi clans. Even Khirrî't's revolt, although of the 'wrong' kind, was recruited from the leading Nizâri tribe of Oman. Abû Bilâl was a Tamîmi, so too the members of the delegation to Ibn Zubayr; Nâfi' b. al-Azraq and the Yashkuri who called on Ibn Zubayr to renounce 'Uthmân, while Ibn Ibâḍ's clan is the same as 'Abdullâh b. Şaffâr's, even more of a coincidence when one realizes it is that of the great Tamîmi leader, who had always exercised moderation and certainly had influence with the Khawârij, al-Aḥnaf b. Qays: 'I have the same feelings as you, but I am patient', was his reply to those who were critical of his moderation. He certainly made no attempt to disguise his feelings towards Mu'âwiya, but a man who had 'a hundred thousand Tamîm to share his anger' had far too great a responsibility to the Islamic state than to act precipitately, as so many of his Khâriji tribesmen would have liked. So it is not surprising that some even claimed he was an Ibâḍi,<sup>66</sup> and such appropriation of a great man with Khâriji sympathies but practising restraint should be borne in mind when we come to consider the case of Jâbir b. Zayd. Najda was from the Ḥanîfa, while the main tribal support for the early supposed Şufri came from Tamîm and B. Shaybân **(p.157)** (Bakr b. Wâ'il). Such tribal association was not going to appeal to the Azd (or Kinda).

The one possible exception to this marked Nizâr/Muḍar orientation is the curious secession led by Qarîb al-Azdi (?) and Zaḥḥâf al-Ṭâ'iy, cousins by marriage.<sup>67</sup> They, I believe were simply from a splinter group, probably protesting at their loss of position as the result of the bulldozing of the tribal groups into large units. The Ṭabari version of what happened is far from clear but does show the pair were seeking support from the B. Yashkur and Ḍubay'a, that is, Muḍar groupings, and that it was the Ṭâhi (Azd) leader who killed Qarîb. There is also confusion about whether they came from Kûfa or Basra. If Ṭabari's date of 40/670 for their secession is correct, then it was the first major revolt after Nahrawân. In any case, it was sufficiently important for Ziyâd himself to hasten from Kûfa to deal with it and led to increasing persecution of the Ḥarûriyya. What is clear about it is that it was pretty extremist, to the point that one report states that Abû Bilâl condemned them. And in this connection it is relevant to note that it was only under pressure from his father that 'Imrân b. Ḥittân al-Shaybâni, the poet who extolled the Khâriji assassin of 'Ali and who was later to become the 'Şufri' leader after the Jazîran revolt was crushed, did not join their secession (or later that of Abû Bilâl).<sup>68</sup> So it is curious that this uprising, whose leaders practised *isti'râḍ*,<sup>69</sup> was considered as in the true line, at least as early as Munîr b. al-Nayyir's *Sîra*, unless one accepts that they, along with several other early Khâriji revolts of the right sort, were much more extremist than the Ibâḍis portray them to be.

So this oddity certainly cannot be considered a Yamani revolt. In so far as the Azd supported any Khâriji uprising it was that of Najda! And that is interesting, for as Crone and Zimmermann<sup>70</sup>

have demonstrated, the Najdiyya became increasingly moderate, to the point that in the classical sources they seem to differ little from the Ibâḍis, notably in their attitude to the *qa'ada* and use of *taqiyya*. They also show that these late Najdiyya, possibly one of the four groups into which they split, according to Baghdâdi, continued to be operative in Bahrayn and Yamâma under an 'Abdi who revolted in 104/724 and may indeed have held out there for some nineteen years. Furthermore, their continued existence as a sect more than a century-and-a-half later is attested by al-Mubarrad. There is interesting possible supporting evidence of this in 'Awtabi's treatment of the 'Abd al-Qays.<sup>71</sup> In this, he recounts how a band of 200 from the Dîl living in the sand country on the borders of Oman (the Lîwâ = Baynûna (p.158) area?) and renowned as fearsome warriors, left their *dârs* and moved first into Jurfâr (= Julfâr), from where they took Awâl (Bahrein islands) from the *majûs*, which the leader of this band, known as the Banu Khârijiyya, proceeded to divide up amongst his kinsmen. There is also numismatic evidence of an 'Abdi dynasty in control of the Qaṭîf area from which they were evicted by the Qarmaṭi Abû Sa'îd al-Jannâbi in 286/899, almost certainly being Khârijite of some kind.<sup>72</sup> So Bahrayn seems to have been a hotbed for movements with radical social notions for many centuries: Khawârij; the Zanj, who probably preached some extremist form of Shi'ism; and then the Qarâmiṭa.

So the Najdiyya went on being a significant political force for a long time, at least on the margins of the Oman region: certainly at the time when the Ibâḍi *da'wa* was activating and the Azd, allies of the 'Abd al-Qays of Bahrayn, were ripe for recruitment. That may well account for the softening in Sâlim b. Dhakwân's shift from his initial position, in which he considered them little different from the Azâriqa. In other words, in both Sâlim and the classical sources there is observation of convergence towards a moderation that might even raise the question of in what way these latter-day Najdiyya differed from the Ibâḍiyya, except that they had been successful in setting up an independent community. But since Sâlim was writing at precisely the time the Ibâḍis were also trying to form independent states, that softening of tone might well reflect a political expediency to find common ground in the Bahrayn-Oman region. Nevertheless, he still has to demonstrate that they were dogmatically wrong, by showing their movement derived from a secession based on false premises, notably with regards to *hijra*.

This evolution of Najdiyya ideas may well indicate a shift in the development of Khârijism in general after the Azâriqa, the Najdiyya proper, and the Shaybânî (supposedly Şufri) uprisings had been crushed. To the point that the Şufris and Ibâḍis are portrayed picturesquely as arriving in North Africa riding on the same camel! Yet the amazing thing is that Sâlim says nothing about these Şufris. The only Khâriji groups he deals with are the Azâriqa, and the Najdiyya (and their internal schisms). Or put another way, the only contemporary Khâriji groups he treats are the ideological descent of Nâfi' b. al-Azraq. It is this that has led Cook to believe that Sâlim predates the Shaybânî revolts. But if he does not, and he does not, then why does he not talk about the Şufris, since they supposedly propounded extremist notions too? Crone and Zimmermann get round this by saying that Sâlim's epistle is polemical rather than historical, and that he was only dealing with the extremists that came out of Basra, so there was no reason to deal with Şâlih and Shabîb as they were (p.159) Jazîrans. That at least supports my view that Sâlim was concerned with the Basran scene, where the Ibâḍi *da'wa* was orientated to converting the Yamani tribes. That in turn would seem to imply that the Şufris were not a rival sect there. Yet although the Jazîran uprising may have not concerned the Basrans, they ought to have been

worried about Oman, where 'Imrân b. al-Ḥittân al-Shaybâni, whom the Ṣufiris considered the successor of Abû Bilâl, found that he was highly revered, and which was therefore ripe for Ṣufiri propaganda. That is, if they really were rival dogmas.

Certainly by the time the Ibâḍis established their first short-lived Imamates they had become vicious rivals, as witness what happened in Oman. After the Jazîran revolt had been broken, the so-called Ṣufiris took refuge in Persian territory, finally entrenching themselves in the island of Barkawân. When the Caliph al-Saffâḥ dispatched an expedition to deal with them they fled to northern Oman. Whereupon the Imam al-Julandâ and the Ibâḍis promptly marched out and crushed them, only to be defeated in turn by the Caliphate force pursuing the Ṣufiris (see Chapter 8). No reason is given for this confrontation other than the implication they were Ṣufiris. I would suggest that it was also because they were the tribal enemies of the Omanis. And we are also told the Ṣufiris started actively campaigning in the Maghrib around 117/734. So if the Najdiyya were of concern for Sâlim, but the Ṣufiris not, it might appear that he was writing before the two schools had become rivals of any note. Or it might demand an explanation of a quite different order: there were no Ṣufiris. And that, essentially, is what Lewinstein has demonstrated in an article<sup>73</sup> which shows how the heresiographers, all of whom are relatively late, created the Ṣufiris as the middle way, the more moderate activists, emanating from the Khawârij *tafrîq* in 64. Just as there was no Ibn Ibâḍ, so there was no 'Abdullâh b. al-Ṣaffâr or other numerous variants of the supposed Ṣufiri eponym, at least certainly not in 64. Once more we are thrown back on our heels and forced to think all through again, as Lewinstein indicates: 'The label "Ṣufriyya" is attested in the Maghrib and Oman from the second century A.H., when historians began to speak of Khârijite tribal groupings as either Ṣufrite or Ibâḍî. The two competed for popular support in the same area, although their rivalry had little, if anything, to do with doctrine.'

He has, perhaps, not developed this conclusion sufficiently. It is the tribal situation that is the key to the whole enigma. That is not to say there were no ideological differences between the two groups, and probably over taking *ghanîma* from defeated Muslims.<sup>74</sup> The Shaybân, after all, were Rabî'a and were fighting a common enemy, and they were making conversions in the areas where the Ibâḍis were propagating their **(p.160)** movement, and perhaps with some success even in Oman, for Abû Sa'îd al-Kudami indicates<sup>75</sup> that the Ṣufiris were active there before the true religion (*dîn al-istiḳâma*) was established, and it is interesting to note that after al-Julandâ's victory one report says Hilâl b. 'Aṭiyya al-Khurâsâni was sent back home to bring back those that had converted into the fold.<sup>76</sup> Nevertheless, all the Khârijî revolts from the Ḥarûrites right down to the Jazîrans involved Muḍar/Nizâr groupings. And all the principal leaders who supposedly went to Ibn Zubayr were also Tamîm or B. Ḥanîfa. The Ibâḍis, on the other hand, exploited Yaman, and until they became fertile ground in the wake of Ibn al-Ash'ath and Yazîd b. al-Muhallab's defeat there was no Ibâḍism proper. In the Maghrib too the two schools exploited tribal rivalries amongst the Berbers. The other point to note is that in the period after the main Azraqî, Najdî, and Shaybâni revolts had been broken, Khârijism, in Basra at least, became increasingly moderate in dogma, so that there was a drawing together of the *qa'ada* and potential activists. That in turn may be the result of the growing power of central government, for Khârijî revolts of the classical kind became impossible, except perhaps for odd splinter-groups in remote corners of Arabia, but even that did not include Oman, which had been brought to heel by Hajjaj. Khârijî revolt was replaced by major uprisings of no particular dogma

---



but appealing to many dissidents, the two most important of which were from the two great Yamani leaders. And they were huge-scale affairs in which Khâriji and ex-Khâriji elements participated. It was the crushing of their two uprisings that once again offered new opportunities to the more moderate Khawârij for making propaganda amongst the defeated. It was this niche that the 'proto-Ibâḍis' filled.

Notes:

(1) See notably Ṭabari, ii. 413–20.

(2) Michael Cook points out that the traditional Iranian structure according to the Pahlavi books (see *EI2 majûs*) has four classes, but these in fact conform to the threefold class structure of the *ḥaḍar* civilizations that essentially lived off the agricultural production of the land (cf. the Wittfogel debate).

(3) Cf. Madelung 1986a.

(4) Cook 1981: 17.

(5) Calder 1993.

(6) Cf. *inter alia* Abû Sufyân's letter to the Omanis.

(7) In this brief summary I have synthesised the detailed discussion, which may be found in Cook and C&Z, while giving my own slant to the origins of Murji'ism and its relationship with others.

(8) Quoted Schwartz 1983: 32.

(9) For details see C&Z 273–5.

(10) As in the author of the *Muṣannaf's K. al-Jawhari*, §24. The list starts with the Falâsifa, Dahriyya, Zanâdiqa, and Thanawiyya. Then come the accepted religions, Jews, Christians, and those tending towards them, like the Jarmadiyya (sp.?) of the Majûs, plus the extremist Shi'a like the Ghurâbiyya. The third class comprises the other 72 *firqas* who have left (*kharajû*) the true religion, all of which will go to hell. But he has four sub-classifications, starting with the Rawâfiḍ, followed by the Murji'a and Shukâk, the Mu'tazila and the late Qadariyya, and finally the extremist (*al-mâriqa*) Khawârij, known as the Azâriqa, calling for *hijra* and the *tashrîk* of those *ahl al-qibla* who oppose them.

(11) Nâṣir b. Jâ'id al-Kharûṣi, *Sîra*.

(12) 2001: 198 ff.

(13) Quoted by Al-Salmi, Thesis, item xxxiii: *non vidi*.

(14) *Sic* in Darjîni's biography of him; in Shammâkhi's, *ahl al-aḥdâth laysû bimushrikîn wa lâ mu minîn bal kuffâr*.

(15) Kâshif edn., ii. 292–6.

(16) *K. al-Taqyîd*, 279.

(17) While the *Sîra* dates to the early 4/10<sup>th</sup> century, Al-Salmi believes it was largely based on a *sîra* of Wâ'il b. Ayyûb al-Ḥaḍrami (i.e. second half of 2/8<sup>th</sup> century).

(18) Gilliot 1997: §11.

(19) Cf. *EI2* under the respective entries for these two figures.

(20) *Kâshif* edn., i. 208.

(21) This term appears right from the start of the movement: a *sîra* of Ḥâjib al-Ṭâ'iy speaks of *jabâbira(t) qawminâ*, as too Shabîb in his *Sîra*.

(22) 1971*b* and 1972*b*.

(23) Madelung 1997: 239-40, based essentially on al-Minqari, *Waq'at Şiffîn*.

(24) Madelung 1997: 246.

(25) *Ibid.* 123.

(26) Juynboll 1983: ch. 1.

(27) Hoyland 2006.

(28) See 'Awtabi-Hinds §39: Hinds translates the phrase as 'followers of the Qur'ân'.

(29) The first figure is from Mubarrad *Kâmil*, the second Qalhâti, the third Baghdâdi.

(30) Mubarrad, *Kâmil*, 540.

(31) This seems to be confirmed by the *Sirat al-Su'âl fî'l-walâya wa'l-barâ'a* by some of the *fuqahâ'* (*Kâshif* edn., i. 374) which speaks of 4,000 being killed at Nahrawân.

(32) See reports in Barrâdi and Shammâkhi; for details see Custers 2006: i. 41 (Anon., *K. al-Nahrawân*).

(33) Madelung 1997: 260.

(34) Mubarrad, *Kâmil*, 548-9; Ṭabari, ii. 10; Shammâkhi, 59.

(35) Qalhâti BM MS 84v-85v; for Ibn Ibâḍ see *KD* 301 and also Barrâdi as cited in Rubinacci 1953.

(36) Baghdâdi, 77 ff.

(37) Cook 1981: 9.

(38) Cf. *inter alia* the *Maronite Chronicle* (Hoyland 1997: 136 ff.).

(39) Ibn Ḥazm, *Ansâb*, 401.

(40) 1971b: 366.

(41) p. 110.

(42) Abû Sufyân in *KD*, ch. 31: Shammâkhi, 63 ff. for slight variants. For classical sources see *EI* Mirdâs b. 'Udaiya.

(43) Abû Zakariyyâ's letter to the Hadramis: cf. also 'Awtabi, *Ḍiyâ'*, iii. 163.

(44) I have no idea who this is. It seems too early for Ibn Zubayr's capture of Mecca and Madina with the help of the Khawârij, but it may be an interpolation or an indication that his revolt was slightly earlier than the sources indicate.

(45) Ṭabari, ii. 514.

(46) For his revolt see notably Ṭabari, i. 3418–39, mostly Abû Mikhnaf (70/669?-157/775; cf. Sezgin 1971 for details of his monographs): but Ya' qûbi, *Ta'rîkh*, ii. 227–8 and Mas'ûdi, *Murûj*, ii, 418–19 throw interesting light, making clear that Khirrîr retired back to northern Oman after Ahwâz and Fârs.

(47) Ya' qûbi, ii. 227–8.

(48) Cf. notably Balâdhuri, *Ansâb*, xi. 80.

(49) Crone 1994: n. 63 and p. 21.

(50) See in particular Ṭabari, ii. 516–17, Balâdhuri, *Ansâb*, xi. 125–47 (notably pp. 126–8 for the continuation of the Najdiyya after Abû Fudayk's defeat in Bahrayn), while Ibn al-Athîr, v. 88–9 has seemingly original information: cf. also C&Z 206–11 and *EI2*, Naḍjadât. For an Ibâḍi view of their doctrine see 'Awtabi, *Ḍiyâ'*, iii. 163–4.

(51) Cf. C&Z's note on §84. He is also mentioned by Shabîb b. 'Aṭiyya (see above).

(52) Cf. Péllat 1970.

(53) Classical sources often describe prominent Khârijis as a *mawlâ* whereas Khâriji sources merely mention the tribe. This may in part be denigration, but it should also be borne in mind that the social status of the Arabs in the ex-Sasanid territory was quite different from the Hijaz.

(54) Cf. Baghdâdi, §89 on the successor to Shabîb b. Yazîd al-Shaybâni.

(55) Balâdhuri, *Ansâb*, xi. 143.

(56) Le Tourneau trans., 155.

(57) *Jâmi' Abi Şufra* no. 3 (6) and *K. al-Taḳyid*, 61 (also to be found in Darjîni in his biography of Abû 'Ubayda). Note that this arises in the context of some very early material in which Abû Şufra reports Abû Sufyân relating from Mulayḥ b. Ḥassân. The fact that it comes via Abû Şufra, incidentally, is supportive of my argument made in the next chapter that Abû Şufra was the real compiler of the *K. Abi Sufyân*.

(58) 1988, 164. Nb Yâqût has nothing about a Khâriji connection in his account of this province. The matter is further confused because Ibn Ḥawqal was also told Ibn Ibâḍ was buried in the Jabal Nafûsa!

(59) *Kâshif* edn. i, 208-9.

(60) Obviously a slip for the 'Atiyya b. al-Aswad al-Ḥanafî, who follows, *a fortiori* since he is described as of the same *ṭarîqa*.

(61) BL Or. 2606 196v on the 16 Khawârij divisions.

(62) 1934.

(63) VII, i 130-3.

(64) Repudiated in Shabîb b. 'Aṭiyya's *sîra*; cf. also Baghdâdi, 77.

(65) 'Awtabi, *Ḍiyâ'*, iii. 163-4.

(66) Shammâkhi, 81; cf. also C&Z 247.

(67) Mubarrad, *Kâmil*, 581, *KD* 387, Shammâkhi, 62, Ṭabari, ii. 90-1. Ṭabari says Qarîb was Iyâd, but all agree Zaḥḥâf was a Ṭâ'iy.

(68) For 'Imrân see notably Mubarrad, *Kâmil*, 532-3; 'Awtabi, AB124v-127r; *KD* 385-7, 525; Shammâkhi, 62-3, 77-8.

(69) For discussion see C&Z, app. 4.

(70) 2001: 206 ff.

(71) AB45v.

(72) Bates 1993.

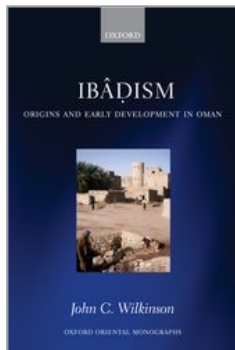
(73) Lewinstein 1992, and also in *EI2*, Şufriyya (part 2).

(74) Cf. C&Z 198.

(75) Al-Salmi 2009b, quoting his *Istiqâma*.

(76) al-Bisyâni *Sîra ... fî Ḥafş b. Râshid*. However, this is not compatible with the account that says he was killed with al-Julandâ b. Mas'ûd (see Ch. 7).

University Press Scholarship Online  
Oxford Scholarship Online



## Ibâḍism: Origins and Early Development in Oman

John C. Wilkinson

Print publication date: 2010

Print ISBN-13: 9780199588268

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2011

DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.001.0001

### The Early Ibâḍis

John C. Wilkinson

DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.003.0006

#### [–] Abstract and Keywords

This chapter discusses the nature and key figures as Ibâḍism took form in Basra, the proto-Ibâḍi period. It starts with a study of the primary source on which the origins of the movement were modelled in late Maghribi sources, a work attributed to Abû Sufyân, but which is frequently in conflict with extant material from his own correspondence and reports from his son Abu 'Abdullah. A thorough study of the main personalities from early sources, much of which has only recently become available (including the correspondence of Jâbir b. Zayd), throws new light on relations with 'Umar II and his son 'Abd al-Mâlik, to whom it is suggested IB 1 was addressed, and the activation of the movement in the 120s culminating in a joint Omani-Hadrami revolt that temporarily took possession of the Holy Cities. An attempt is made to show that while Jâbir b. Zayd and Abû 'Ubayda were key figures for doctrine and law, certain others were responsible for activating the movement, Hâjib al-Tâ'iy, al-Rabî' b. Habîb, Dumâm b. Sâ'ib. Reconsideration is also given to Sâlim b. Dhakwân.

*Keywords:* K. Abi Sufyân, Ibâḍism, Jâbir b. Zayd, Abû 'Ubayda, Hâjib al-Tâ'iy, al-Rabî' b. Habîb, Dumâm b. al-Sâ'ib, Sâlim b. Dhakwân, 'Umar II, Barsa

#### Proto-Ibâḍis

Which brings us back once again to the role of Jâbir b. Zayd. But having fallen short of our target by aiming at 64 AH with Ibn Ibâḍ as the founder of Ibâḍism, let us avoid making the same mistake again by bracketing it, ranging on a date when we know for certain that Ibâḍism, even if not necessarily under that name, emerged as a *da'wa* and work back. The obvious figure to aim at is the man whom the Ibâḍi sources conventionally state succeeded Jâbir, Abû 'Ubayda Muslim

b. Abi Karîma, though just how far he was involved in actual activation will be questioned. But it is with his period that investigation can commence.

The *K. Abi Sufyân* (Maḥbûb b. al-Ruḥayl/Raḥîl) as a source

Before doing so however, it is necessary to look at the major primary source for the history of these early Ibâdis, the *K. Abi Sufyân*, which is known essentially through quotations in relatively late Maghribi authors: (Abû 'Abbâs Aḥmad b. Sa'îd) al-Darjîni (d. c. 670/1271-2), *K. Ṭabaqât al-Mashâyikh*, and (Abûl-'Abbâs Aḥmad) al-Shammâkhi (d. 928/1522), *K. al-Siyar* (biographies). It was a major work, for al-Barrâdi (8/14<sup>th</sup> century) reports that as well as *akhbâr* (which is all we know of it), it also contained *fîqh*, *kalâm*, and *'aqâ'id*.

The quotations that survive from Darjîni and Shammâkhi, should be regarded with some circumspection, for these authors were writing long after the period of Ibâdi revivalism (*iḥyâ al-dîn*), in which the history of the Basrans had been formalized and structured according to Maghribi norms. This process culminated in the Ibâdi *ḥadîth* collection, in which Abû Ya'qûb Yûsuf b. Ibrâhîm al-Warjlâni (d. 570/1174) 'arranged' (*tartib*) al-Rabî's supposed *ḥadîth* transmissions, a work we shall be returning to later in this chapter and more fully in Chapter 14. In it, the key figure for transmitting what came from Jâbir b. Zayd to al-Rabî' was Abû 'Ubayda. Building up his position was essential to that end, but not hard to establish. After all, al-Rabî' was Abû 'Ubayda's pupil and the missionaries who had come to the Maghrib had been trained by him: so already (p.162) in the first Maghribi Ibâdi history, that of Ibn Sallâm (second half 3/9<sup>th</sup> century), Abu 'Ubayda has been more or less posited as the successor of Jâbir (see below). The result is that when, towards the mid-6/12<sup>th</sup> century, the first formal Maghribi *ḥamalât al-'ilm* line was established by Maqrîn b. Muḥammad al-Bughṭûri, whose *K. Siyar Mashâyikh Jabal Nafûsa* (or var iants of that title) was a primary source for al-Shammâkhi, the CL (common link) between the Maghrib and Abû 'Ubayda were two of those missionaries: 'Abd al-Rahmân, the founder of the Rustamid dynasty, and Abû'l- Zâjir Ismâ'îl b. Darrâr al-Ghadâmasi. And the other three later *ḥamalât* chains also have the same CL.<sup>1</sup>

The essence of Abû Ya'qûb's approach was one of vindicating the Ibâdis and refuting the other seventy-two false *firqas*, and it was for this he needed a *ḥadîth* collection so as to justify the Ibâdis as a proper *madhhab*. Shammâkhi was imbued with his works, and wrote a *Muktaṣar* of his *'Adl wa'l-inṣâf*. A similar approach to that expose was apparent in the *al-Mujâz*<sup>2</sup> of Abû Ya'qûb's friend, Abû Ammâr 'Abd al-Kâfi al-Warjlâni, with whom he went on the Hajj. And he too wrote a work that was sometimes called a *tartib*, except that in his case it was not an arrangement of supposed *ḥadîth*, but a *Ṭabaqât al-Mashâyikh*, a principal source for Darjîni, who brought the *ṭabaqât* (fifty-year cohorts, the first four of which were *Shaykhs* of the Mashriq) up to date. The origins of this revivalism go back to the previous century. Both the Warjlânîs had studied with Abû Zakariyyâ' Yaḥyâ b. Abi Bakr al-Warjlâni, whose *K. al-Siyar wa akhbâr al-â'imma* (= *Ta'rikh Abi Zakariyyâ'*), written around 504, formed the first part of Darjîni's work, which he wrote as a result of the Omanis requesting a history of Ibâdism in the Maghrib. Abû Zakariyyâ' in turn had been a pupil of the prominent theologian Abû'l-Rabî' Sulaymân b. Yakhlaf al-Mazâti (d. 471/1079), who himself wrote a *K. al-Siyar*, some time post-450. Another of Abû

Zakariyyâ's pupils was the outstanding traditionist and historian al-Wisyânî (Abû'l-Rabî' Sulaymân b. 'Abd al-Sallâm).<sup>3</sup>

So, one way and another, a consensual view of history and the key figures in the Ibâdi movement more or less emerged in the Maghrib from the second half of the 5/11<sup>th</sup> century. A further stage in this process of formalized transmission seems to have been the work of the prolific Abû Sâkin 'Âmir b. 'Ali al-Shammâkhi (d. 792/1390), known as *Ḍiyâ' al-Dîn*, who is the CL for the other three Maghribi transmission lines. And one of his pupils was al-Barrâdi.

In other words, virtually all our knowledge of the *K. Abi Sufyân* derives (p.163) from works that were tailored on the standard model of Ibâdi history. And we know it was used by Abû Ya'qûb (see Chapter 14). Some elements from it first appear in Oman, probably sent by the Maghribis, during the time when material was being 'rescued', notably by Ibn Baraka (see Chapter 12), and it is directly quoted in the *K. al-Taqyid* (i.e. at the latest 625/1228). It thus played a role in the convergence towards the model of Ibâdi origins as developed in the Maghrib, which finally took hold in Oman also.

Another important aspect of the work is that the ascription to Abû Sufyân is no guarantee that it was by him, in fact rather the contrary. There exist *Kitâbs* of the Basrans Jâbir b. Zayd, Ḍumâm b. al-Sâ'ib, Abû Nûḥ, Abû al-Ḥurr, as well as collections of early Omani '*ulamâ'*, all recorded by pupils or pupils of pupils. If it were written by the presumed author it would be the exception. Some of the *K. Abi Sufyân's* early content, notably that deriving from Mulaḃ, and particularly concerning *qadar*, is to be found in the *Jâmi' Abi Şufra*, which was known from at least Ibn Ja'far's time in Oman. It was this Abû Şufra 'Abd al-Malik b. Şufra, an Iraqî Ibâdi, who compiled the *Âthâr* of al-Rabî', almost certainly for the Maghribis. The editor of the reconstructed *Jâmi'*<sup>4</sup> confirms what I said in my 1985 *Der Islam* article in connection with these *Âthâr*, that Abû Şufra did not transmit direct from al-Rabî', and that his teachers were Wâ'il b. Ayyûb and above all Abû Sufyân. That indicates he was from the last third of the 2/8<sup>th</sup> century, while his correspondence with Abû 'Abdullâh and his two brothers, notably over the Created Qur'ân issue (Chapter 9), shows he was prominent in the 230s. Although I cannot prove it, my own view is that it was he who compiled what he had learnt from his teachers as the *K. Abi Sufyân*, once again specifically for the Maghribis, probably for Aflaḃ (Imam 208-58?/823-72?) who highly praised and recommended it.<sup>5</sup>

Like everything written for the Maghribis, it was destined for a very small elite, the local *khâṣṣ* who understood Arabic. The Mashriqî Ibâdi community was the font of knowledge, and the *ulamâ* and the urbane Tahert Imams were avid to learn all they could. Since the only direct contact between the two communities was the Hajj (see Chapter 7), that meant the '*ilm* had to be recorded in writing, or set down by, or from, the few who actually visited from the Mashriq. That very process rigidified it in a way that was not characteristic of the Ibâdis in the Mashriq itself. Not only did it have to rationalize origins of the movement in Basra and explain why a Berber population was ruled by a dynasty of Imams who claimed Persian royal descent, but also how Ibâdi doctrine, rather than that of the Mu'tazila or Şufriyya, both rival Mashriqî schools active in the Maghrib, had been adopted.

---

**(p.164)** Abû Şufra's time was also one of major change. Abû Sufyân was the 'leader' when the Basran organization was wound up, and his sons, and possibly he himself, moved to Oman (see Chapter 9). So his attributed *Kitâb* was to be a legacy of the period. Inevitably there were simplifications, eradication of anomalies and anachronisms, further improved by the Maghribis themselves. So they evolved a nice, neat order of *ṭabaqât*, in which Jâbir b. Zayd was established as the founding father and Abû 'Ubayda his successor. Thus the biographies of the founding fathers are not only outlined to serve as uplifting models, but also have to conform to this temporal framework.

In the Mashriq, on the other hand, there was the living tradition, an essentially Arab tradition, in which the Ibâdis were adjusting to changing circumstances and an evolving ideology. This supposed *Kitâb* of Abû Sufyân was quite unknown to the Omanis at this juncture, and had it been in circulation they would straightaway have been aware of its anachronisms and inconsistencies. So uncritical are the Maghribi sources, on the other hand, that al-Darjîni (cf. also al-Barrâdi) produces a sort of covenant ('*ahd*) sent by Abû Sufyân to Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq, a total impossibility, unless it is a sort of posthumous profession of faith to the leader of the first Ibâdi state. Furthermore, what Abû Sufyân says in this work is often at variance with other of his extant material (his letters to the Hadramis and Omanis concerning Hârûn b. al-Yamân), as too the material deriving from his son, Abû 'Abdullâh (d. 260/873).

In this account for the Maghribis, the *K. Abi Sufyân* also provides certain details that are designed to help place and date the purported author himself, and which in my opinion his 'amanuensis' deliberately improved. We shall be discussing his family (known as the Al Raḥîl/Ruḥayl in Omani sources) elsewhere, but we can straightaway note that the *nisba* of 'Abdi ('Abd al-Qays), given by the Maghribi historians, should be disregarded. It is a *nisba* that gets scattered around rather liberally by them. Thus Ja'far b. al-Sammâk/Sammân, whom they nominate as leader of the delegation to 'Umar II, is an 'Abdi, while Şuḥâr b. al-'Abd has become Şuḥâr al-'Abdi, thereby causing great confusion to van Ess (who rightly concludes they were two different people).<sup>6</sup> All we need note here is that the family, although Basran, was not Omani in origin, but the Qurashi relationship should be taken with a pinch of salt, as too the story that Abû Sufyân's great-grandfather Hubayra was a *fâris* of the Prophet and was exiled with Jâbir in Oman. More to the point is that Abû Sufyân was well integrated into the Basran Ibâdi community, and lived in the Azd quarter. Various accounts make him a stepson of al-Rabî', while al-Mulayḥ, who was a young man at the time of the Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq uprising (**p.165**) and told him some of the story, seems to have been a fosterbrother of his 'grandfather'. We also see Abû Sufyân acquainted with Ḥayyân (b. al-A'raj?), with a son of Ḥâjib al-Ṭâ'iy and his contemporaries, 'Abd-al-Malik al-Ṭawîl, and Wâ'il b. Ayyûb. So Abû Sufyân was well placed to pass on to his pupils something of the period in which the *da'wa* was activated, from old men who were young at the time, while he himself could certainly be considered an authority for the latter part of al-Rabî' b. Ḥabîb's life.

All of which leads Crone and Zimmermann, who detail the evidence concerning his dating, to conclude, quite reasonably, that he was born before 140 and took over the Basran community from Abû Ayyûb Wâ'il b. Ayyûb al-Ḥaḍrami c. 190. That in turn has led them to suggest, on the grounds of excessive age, a date for his death of c. 210, rather than the 230s I had originally

---



proposed based on the standard report that the Hârûn b. al-Yamân debate occurred in Muhannâ b. Jayfar's Imamate (226–37/841–51). This they redate to around 200, with the inference that the Imam addressed was not to Muhannâ but Ghassân b. 'Abdullâh (192–207/808–23). In fact I agree with them (cf. Chapter 9), and it certainly makes sense if (a) Wâ'il was indeed active in Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq's time, and (b) there really was a succession of Imams in Basra, with Abû Sufyân taking over from Wâ'il c. 190.

But in reviewing all this material I am increasingly led to think that such a structured organization in Basra is also part of a rationalization that was developed in the Maghrib after their Imamate collapsed and the surviving communities described as going into *kitmân*. Ibâḍism evolved from a far more amorphous background. Certain figures may have developed a precedence in their mature years, to whom others would turn when fundamental issues were at stake, and who perhaps presided their conclaves, but there was never any single figure who directed a political movement, except perhaps al-Rabî', who emerged as a leader at a particularly crucial juncture, with crisis in the Maghrib over the first Rustamid Imam's succession, and the renewed attempts to establish an Imamate in Oman. Even then he was never an 'Imam'. It is a theme of this book that, generally speaking, consensus was the essential characteristic of the Basran Ibâḍis 'ulamâ' from the start, and they formed what was essentially a *ḥalqa*, a teaching and advisory body for propagating doctrine.<sup>7</sup> None was an 'Imam', whether of *kitmân* or any other sort.

**(p.166) The first generation: Abû 'Ubayda's true position**

Thus in Abû Sufyân's account to the Omanis rebutting Hârûn's doctrine, Jâbir, Abû Bilâl, Ḍumâm b. al-Sâ'ib, Abû Nûḥ Ṣâliḥ al-Dahhân, Abû 'Ubayda, and Abû Mawḍûd Ḥâjib al-Ṭâ'iy are all jumbled together as the first exemplars of the right line. Similarly, in the grouping that followed Abû 'Ubayda and Ḥâjib (note the association of the two names), and which he starts with al-Rabî', are eight other names plus unspecified 'ulamâ', but no Wâ'il. And, he comments, *shuyûkh al-Muslimin qad adrakû al-nâs waḥafazû 'anhum wa'arafû âthârahum wa ḥafaznâ dhalika 'anhum*. And that, I suggest, is the nub of the real history, the development of a consensual view in the *majlises* of certain *fuqahâ'* and theologians, two or three of whom were probably among Jâbir b. Zayd's many pupils: and it is this loose organization which finally gelled into a self-sufficient school and political movement that became known as Ibâḍism. Nowhere is there a suggestion that any was an Imam. On the contrary, Abû Sufyân himself names only the *shirâ'* leaders as Imams, and never does he state that there was a formal succession. Again, in Munîr b. al-Nayyir's *Sira* to the Imam Ghassân b. 'Abdullâh, in which he recounts what he learnt from his father concerning al-Julandâ b. Mas'ûd's time, he tells how they referred a problem to *ahl al-faḍl min ahl al-'Irâq*: no names are given, although he produces two long lists of Omanis for the Imam to emulate. Similarly, in Hârûn b. al-Yamân's letter to the Omani Imam he refers to the letter [Abû Sufyân] Maḥbûb b. al-Ruḥayl had written advising of the matter, *yajma' ahl al-âfâq min al-muslimin 'alâ dhalika*, in other words, the collective view they supposedly had agreed. As for Sâlim b. Dhakwân, he quotes no personal sources at all for his *Sira*.

So what we seem to be essentially dealing with is precedence in jurisprudence, not leadership, certainly not in the political sense of the term. Ibn Sallâm, the early Maghribi historian, does not say that Abû 'Ubayda was some sort of formal successor of Jâbir b. Zayd, but that he

transmitted from him and was the best *faqīh* after him.<sup>8</sup> To get around the chronological improbability that a young Abû 'Ubayda, who almost certainly died after 140/757 in the reign of Manṣûr, was implicitly the major pupil of Jâbir, Ibn Sallâm<sup>9</sup> adopts the late date of 103 for Jâbir's death, rather than 93 which Abû 'Ubayda himself gave.<sup>10</sup> But at the same time he also quotes what the Companion of the Prophet Anas b. Mâlik said when he learnt of his death (Anas died between 91 and 93/709-11, **(p.167)** when he was either 97 or 107!), without commenting on the anachronism. The temporal dimension is further muddled by stating that Abû 'Ubayda, Abû Nûḥ Ṣâliḥ al-Dahhân, and Ḍumâm b. al-Sâ'ib (both of whom were *faqīh muft*<sup>in</sup>, i.e. issuing legal judgements) were all of the same period. Yet for someone so important, our Maghribi historian is strangely silent about Abû 'Ubayda's career and there is absolutely no suggestion that he was imprisoned with Ḍumâm by Hajjaj, as recounted by Shammâkhi.<sup>11</sup>

The lie to this Maghribi interpretation of Abû 'Ubayda's position as Jâbir's successor, adopted much, much later also by the Omanis, is given by Abû Sufyân himself. In his letter to the Omanis he names Ḍumâm b. al-Sâ'ib as Abû 'Ubayda's principal teacher, whilst in his letter to the Hadramis he accords that role to Ṣuḥâr, as also does his son Abû Abdullâh.<sup>12</sup> In the *K. Abi Sufyân* he names Ṣuḥâr and Ja'far b. al-Sammâk/Sammân, adding that what Abû 'Ubayda learnt from Ja'far was more than what he learnt from Jâbir, thus subtly suggesting he knew Jâbir. There is some confirmation of this by Abû 'Abdullâh (as too his son Bashîr<sup>13</sup>) who gives the impression that he had known (*adraka*) Jâbir. But then he makes the situation quite clear: Abû 'Ubayda related Jâbir b. Zayd via Ḍumâm, but most of the learning he transmitted (*ḥamal*) came from Ṣuḥâr b. al-'Abd. Neither Ṣuḥâr nor Ja'far feature among Jâbir's pupils. The former was from the *fuqahâ' al-Muslimin* of Khurâsân, apparently a contemporary of Jâbir's, and the Omani sources<sup>14</sup> add that he was from the Ṭâḥiyya, the rather individualistic Omani Azd group in Basra also present in Khurâsân. Ja'far is named as a member of the delegation that went to interview the Caliph 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azîz and was subsequently killed in Yazîd b. al-Muhallab's rebellion (see below). Ḍumâm, on the other hand certainly was a pupil of Jâbir, and as we shall see, a major transmitter for the Ibâḍis of his master's teaching. In other words, Abû 'Ubayda did not transmit direct from Jâbir. To say that he knew (*adraka*) Jâbir means nothing much more than that he was alive in his time. It is possible that he saw the old man, and might even have been introduced as a youngster into his *majlis* by someone like Ḍumâm. But that is a very far cry from saying he transmitted direct from him, as the Maghribis claimed. Abû 'Abdullâh's statement that Abû 'Ubayda was said to have known (*adraka*) those who knew Jâbir b. Zayd is essentially the correct one.<sup>15</sup>

Furthermore, it is implicit that Abû 'Ubayda's learning stemmed from three quite independent teachers, Ṣuḥâr b. al-'Abd, Ja'far al-Sammân, and indirectly Jâbir via Ḍumâm. This is far from the monolinear descent **(p.168)** from Jâbir as presented in the Maghribi model. What we have is a group who more or less make up the first generation of proto-Ibâḍis, and whom Abû 'Ubayda knew as a young man. Abû Sufyân relates to the Omanis and Hadramis how Ḍumâm, Ṣâliḥ al-Dahhân, Abû Nûḥ (these seem to be separate people in his accounts),<sup>16</sup> and other of their ilk (*nuzarâ' uhum*) amongst the *fuqahâ'* of the Muslims and the *mashâyikh* used to join together in the heat of Ramadan and go by boat to the Friday mosque. And he adds a little story from Qurra b. 'Umar (al-Azraq/al-Awraq), a member of the next generation, how they left together for the Hajj and how Ḥâjib b. Muslim (Ḥâjib al-Ṭâ'iy?) caught them up a couple of

stages outside Basra. I would suggest that these three or four formed the original core group of the proto-Ibâḍis, whose influence developed among a somewhat younger generation. Abû 'Abdullâh, throws some further light on their relationship.<sup>17</sup> Although Abû 'Ubayda was more expert in *fiqh* than Ḍumâm, Abû Nûḥ was better than both of them and Ja'far. On the other hand Ja'far, although humbler in status than Abû 'Ubayda, was the soundest in religious matters (*wa kân huwa al-ḥujja fi'l-din*). But all were people of honour and favour (*sharaf wa faḍl*).

So who were all these predecessors and contemporaries of Abû 'Ubayda, and indeed where does this place Abû 'Ubayda himself? One thing is for sure, he did not succeed to the Ibâḍi leadership from Jâbir, even if one assumes that the latter was the founder of the sect. He was far too young to do so, it makes no sense of the missing generation of his seniors, and in any case the initiatives in activating the movement did not come from him. Furthermore, in later lists of *ḥamalât al-'ilm* in Oman no importance is given to him; it is al-Rabî' who transmits from Jâbir (see Chapter 14). There is clearly a generation missing in that neat rationalization of the Ibâḍi movement in Basra under a succession of Imams, Jâbir b. Zayd, Abû 'Ubayda, al-Rabî' b. Ḥabîb, Abû Ayyûb Wâ'il al-Ḥaḍrami, and finally Abû Sufyân Maḥbûb b. al-Ruḥayl, even allowing for the cover that they were living in *kitmân*. If that model is followed no sense can be made of the dating or the role played by these personalities.

Ibâḍism had its roots in the learning of several figures, not just Jâbir and not necessarily all of Ibâḍi leanings. Groups with what might be seen an Ibâḍi tendency met in *majlises* throughout the city as far back as Ziyâd (p.169) and 'Ubaydallâh's time, as is shown by a story recounted by Abû Sufyân from al-Mulayḥ in Darjîni's biography of Ḥâjib. He learnt of a *majlis* being held by 'Abd al-Malik al-Ṭawîl that was being frequented by a large number of people at night and was attracting the neighbours' attention. Ḥâjib, who obviously had some authority, was worried and suggested that they should be rather more discrete. 'Abd al-Malik replied they had never had any trouble except for once, in the time of Ziyâd and his son, when they learnt they were being raided. They had run away, leaving their sandals outside, but when the police arrived and saw them the old lady who owned the house gave a pretty tall story of why they were there, which was obviously accepted with suspicion: but they got away with it. It was in such assemblies that a coherent approach was thrashed out for defining the true Islamic community, the rules of conduct when declaring *shirâ'*, and what was permitted when living amongst other Muslims as *qa'ada*. Nevertheless, I believe Ḍumâm was a key figure in gelling a communal view over such issues. On the one hand he seems to have been a genuine pupil of Jâbir, and on the other it was he who insisted on the essential concept that brought unity to the movement, the doctrine of *walâya* (association, affiliation) and *barâ'a* (dissociation, rejection). It may be illustrated by the little story which is quoted of him both in the *Bayân al-Shar'* (vol. iii) and in the *Jâmi' al-Mufîd* of Abû Sa'îd al-Kudami in connection with making a *tawba*, a repentance. It runs to the effect: Ḍumâm was asked what he thought of a particular person. Someone in the *majlis* said he was bad. Ḍumâm rejected the view. The person said I dissociate from him. In which case, Ḍumâm responded, I dissociate from you.<sup>18</sup> 'You wouldn't do that to me, would you Oh Abû Abdullah?' 'I certainly would; you dissociated from someone to whom I have given *walâya* so I dissociate from you.' Then the man made a repentance, Ḍumâm accepted it, and withdrew his *barâ'a* from him.

In other words, there was to be no dissension in the group. Once a matter had been decided, that was that, and the opinion devolved on others with whom one associated, past and present. And it is also worth noting, that as a prominent *faqīh*, Ḍumâm made rulings, including one recorded over the all-important issue of *ghanîma*. Whatever his role, Ḍumâm clearly was a powerful figure in the movement and his *riwâya*, known as the *Kitâb Ḍumâm*, the key transmission from Jâbir b. Zayd (see below). His close accomplices were Şâliḥ al-Dahhân, (Abû Nûḥ, if he was indeed someone different) and Ḥâjib. And in enumerating the prominent Ibâḍi forebears for the Hadramis, Abû Sufyân places Ḍumâm immediately after Mirdâs (Abû Bilâl) and Jâbir, an ordering echoed in the *Qâmûs al-Sharî'a* where he features immediately after these two and Abû Bilâl's (p.170) half-brother 'Urwa. Abû 'Abdullâh (A. Sufyân's son) tells us Ḍumâm was a bedu (B. Nadab, a Shanu'a Azd clan<sup>19</sup>) of Omani origins born in Basra. Likewise, he says, Ḥâjib was an Omani born in Basra and al-Faḍl b. Jundab, an Azd *mawlâ*, who was a *mawsir* (capitalist in merchant enterprises). And it is said that Ḥâjib was the man who organized the affairs of the Muslims (i.e. Ibâḍis) and arranged the supply of arms (for the Abû Ḥamza-Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq revolt) and he died with a debt of 50,000 (elsewhere 150,000) dirhams, which al-Faḍl had guaranteed against his property (known as Muslim b. Khâlîd) in Sohar, and had to sell to settle it. The *Qâmûs* then gives a short account of this great uprising, before turning back to the Ibâḍi delegation which went to the Caliph 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azîz 'Umar II 99-101/717-720).

#### The delegation to 'Umar II

These two events, however, will be taken in chronological order. The unexpected accession of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azîz ('Umar II) must have come as a pleasant surprise to the moderate Khârijis, who were also impressed by his son 'Abd al-Malik, who unfortunately died while the mission was still in Damascus (see below). Conditions, as we have seen, improved enormously in Oman and 'Umar also saved the situation in the Berber territories. The new Caliph appeared to be installing a genuinely reformist government. It was less welcome to Yazîd b. al-Muhallab, who had counted on one of Sulaymân's sons to succeed, and he once again lost office, but his vicious campaign against those who had imprisoned and tortured him had gone too far, and certain of the Azd establishment, like the 'Atîk leader in Basra, were critical. Certainly 'Umar's removal of Yazîd cannot be interpreted as an anti-Yaman manoeuvre. So a group of 'proto-Ibâḍis' was amongst those who wended their way to Damascus to question the new Caliph. They inevitably stumbled over the thorny issue of 'Uthmân. However, they were reasonably impressed by his attitude, and even the fiery Abû Ḥamza in his sermon says he was well intentioned but failed to live up to his aims. Which is a bit unfair, considering how short his reign was. The *Muṣannaf*,<sup>20</sup> in the context of how a non-elected or even a *ḍa'îf* Imam can win general acceptance, is interesting in the way it speaks of 'Umar. Although the Muslims were not gathered at his election his *sira* improved and he won acceptance by *al-riḍâ' wa taslîm*. But when they requested him to make clear the religion of God he equivocated. So they left him and did not confirm his *imâma*, despite improvement of his conduct.

(p.171) Once again the Omani list of those in this delegation<sup>21</sup> is at variance with the Maghribi version, with the exception of Ja'far b. al-Sammâk, who is given the *nisba* 'Abdi by Darjîni and Shammâkhi. Basing himself on (the *Kitâb*) Abû Sufyân, he is described as the leader of the delegation, and it is in his little biography that Abû Sufyân lets slip that Ja'far was the Shaikh of Abû 'Ubayda, and learnt more from him than Jâbir. Of those who accompanied him were al-

Khabbâb b. Kulayb and Sâlim al-Hilâli (some have identified the latter with Sâlim b. Dhakwân). In the Omani version Ja'far is a member (except that his father is sometimes called al-Sammân rather than al-Sammâk), and the leader of the delegation is Abû'l-Ḥurr 'Ali b. al-Ḥuşayn al-'Anbari, who was a very rich merchant (*mawsir*) trading between Basra and his native (?) Mecca. He used to give half his profit to the Muslim poor, another quarter to those he favoured, retaining only a quarter for his own needs. He played a very important role in the Mukhtâr-Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq uprising and died at 'Yawm Mekka' (see below). Also listed as being with them was Abû Mawdûd Ḥabîb b. Ḥafṣ b. Ḥâjib, described as a *mawlâ* of the B. Hilâl (this is probably a conflation of the Sâlim al-Hilâli of the Maghribi version and a possible grandson of Abû Mawdûd Ḥâjib al-Ṭâ'iy<sup>22</sup>). The other members of the delegation were Abû Sufyân Qanbar, and one of the most prominent *faqîhs* of the Muslims, Abû 'Abdullâh al-Ḥattât b. Kâtib,<sup>23</sup> known as Abû 'Abdullâh b. Kâtib, a tribesman of the B. Humaym (variant B. Haytham) who originally came from Tuwâm but lived at al-Samad al-Kindi of Nizwâ. Like Ja'far, he lost his life in the Yazîd b. al-Muhallab revolt.<sup>24</sup>

#### Abû 'Ubayda and Ḥâjib al-Ṭâ'iy; *qu'ûd* and *shirâ'*

No Abû 'Ubayda in all this. The gloss that appears in Maghribi sources that he regretted the delegates had not been able to come to terms and accord 'Umar II *walâya* is just that, an attempt to show that all was organized by him, a statement taken literally by Lewicki who relies on late **(p.172)** Maghribi sources for Basra. Indeed, in the *Qâmûs al-Sharî'a* Abû 'Ubayda has no mention until not only after this group, but also a few words about the Âl Ruḥayl family (from whom came Abû Sufyân) and Şuḥâr b. al-'Abd. 'As for Abû 'Ubayda al-Kabîr he is Muslim b. Abi Karîma and was from Basra', we are at last advised. After which we are told that Abû Nûḥ Şâlih b. Nûḥ al-Dahhân was from Basra and lived in the Ṭayy quarter, and our compiler goes again with further snippets about others. And that is all he says about the man Ibn al-Sallâm describes as the most important figure after Jâbir and who heads the names belonging to his third *ṭabaqa*. True, a little more does appear about him under the Omani biography of Khalaf b. Ziyâd al-Baḥrânî, who left his home country to seek the *ḥaqq* and was told by an Ibâdî to go to Basra, where he met Abû 'Ubayda. Questioning him about his *madhhab* (*sic*) he was converted (*nasaba lahu*), saying this is the Truth.<sup>25</sup> It was this Khalaf who took part in the establishing of al-Julandâs Imamate (Chapter 8).

Here in a nutshell is the essential. Abû 'Ubayda was responsible for what Crone and Zimmermann (basing themselves on van Ess) call doctrinal policing. But I see no evidence that it was he who started sending out missionaries to convert Muslims outside Iraq. The references they give for that statement are modern authors who follow the standardized model, which makes Abû 'Ubayda in charge when missionary activity started, particularly in the Maghrib, and that he taught some of their leaders who came to Basra. But that is to assume that he was responsible for coordinating the activation of the movement politically and played a role in what our authors call the great Arabian revolt. On the contrary, all the indications are that he had nothing to do with it and Crone and Zimmermann quite rightly point to the fact that Abû 'Ubayda was a quietist, that he was against a *khurûj*,<sup>26</sup> and that Madâ'ini says the person responsible for it was 'Abdullâh b. Yaḥyâ (Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq). On the other hand, rather like Jâbir (see below), he taught those who came to Basra the *fiqh* which formed the *madhhab al-dîn* that they took back to their home countries.

---

Here I need to pick up again my thesis, already touched on in the previous chapter, that there were two streams in Ibâḍism, *qu'ûd* and *shirâ'*, what was later called *qawl* and *'amal*, but these did not really come together until 'the great Arabian revolt'. Until the beginning of the second century, the proto-Ibâḍis generally were perforce *qa'ada*, not because they adopted the rationale that secession against the unjust Imam was **(p.173)** reprehensible, as Sâlim b. Dhakwân's so-called *fatana* claimed, but because they had no real warrior material to exploit. True, they did work on winning over the Muhallabids, notably through their womenfolk, three or four being mentioned as converts,<sup>27</sup> while Yazîd's brother 'Abd al-Malik was at least a sympathizer (see below). But in the end, those who determined to fight the Umayyad regime had no alternative but to join the great revolts of Ibn al-Ash'ath and Yazîd b. al-Muhallab, neither of whom were motivated by any major ideology, and it is recorded that two of the most prominent members of the delegation to 'Umar II, Ja'far b. al-Sammâk and Ḥattât b. Kâtib, were killed in Yazîd's revolt. Although not considered a righteous *khurûj*, Abû 'Ubayda absolved them and accorded them posthumous *walâya*,<sup>28</sup> subsequently rationalized that it was justifiable to join a bad regime against a worse. It was now that the Ibâḍis began to work on the disaffected tribesmen: Kinda and Azd, Ṭayy and even 'Abd al-Qays then became the potential *shurât*. But harnessing their *'aṣabiyya* to religious ideology took time. The proto-Ibâḍis, albeit nearly all Basran, were from really quite diverse backgrounds, and had their work cut out, both to promote themselves and to inculcate a disciplined Muḥakkima dogma on tribesmen burning for revenge. They were certainly not helped by the fact that Khâriji revolts, both of the right and wrong sort, had hitherto largely been inspired by Tamîm, Ḥanîfa, and Bakr b. Wâ'il clan leaders.

A more open expression of their views was perhaps also helped by the government of the Bâjili, Khâlid b. 'Abdullâh al-Qasri, whom Hishâm b. 'Abd al-Malik (105–25/724–43) appointed to Iraq, when he succeeded his violently anti-Yamani brother Yazîd II. His fifteen years of office showed a hitherto unknown degree of moderation, which led to some rapprochement with the Yamani and a tolerance perhaps to the proto-Ibâḍis. So, one of the most prominent (*afâḍil al-muslimîn*), Abû Muḥammad al-Nahdi, the man who propounded the notion that wrongdoers were *kuffâr*, inveighed publicly against the Caliph Hishâm and his governor Khâlid b. 'Abdullâh al-Qasri. Bilâl b. Abi Burda b. Abi Mûsâ, the Qadi of Basra (from 110–20/728–38), told him at least to be tactful enough to shut up when he was passing by, but he took no notice. Our firebrand also condemned the highly popular al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri **(p.174)** over *qadar*. Such tolerance would certainly seem to indicate a fairly unconcerned official attitude to the proto-Ibâḍis. But then once again came a reversal of favours, and I agree with Lewicki<sup>29</sup> that the removal of both the Iraqi governor and his Basran qadi prompted a new state of activation.

The potential Yamani *shurât* were much more likely to be inspired by the courage of a Abû Muḥammad al-Nahdi (himself possibly Yamani) than a Tamîmi *mawlâ* who was so frightened of the authorities that he taught in a cellar with a sentry posted outside with a bucket that he rattled when anyone approached, whereupon he and his pupil hid until the intruder had passed by.<sup>30</sup> Not exactly inspiring, even if some sources tried to make out Abû 'Ubayda's master had been Abû Bilâl's brother, 'Urwa (a total anachronism, in any case, and all part of trying to make it plausible he could have been a pupil of Jâbir). Nevertheless, Abû 'Ubayda did become the reference in theological debate and *fiqh*, and this role became increasingly important once the movement had activated. The rather simplistic call of the *shurât*, the young Ibâḍis who entered

---

Mecca and Madina on behalf of Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq to obey *Kitâb Allâh* and the *Sunna* of his Prophet,<sup>31</sup> might have been enough for their predecessors at Nahrawân, but the world had moved on in the ninety or so years since, and such dogma, unexceptionable as it was, needed elaborating and refining. Furthermore, there is some evidence (see below) that those participating in this first Ibâdi uprising had not always comported themselves entirely within the prescribed notions of warfare with other Muslims, and their conduct may well have highlighted the need to refine various issues concerning *ghanîma*.

It was this first proper attempt to create a state by the *shurât* following the precepts of Abû Bilâl that finally brought the two rivers of doctrine and *shirâ* to form a single mighty stream of the *da'wa*. Later, after Imamates had become firmly established, the debate about *shirâ*' and *qu'ûd* became of a secondary order and largely subsumed under the wider concept of *jihâd*. What then became important were the principles of government, so that doctrine and law emerged as the engrossing subjects. Later still, doctrinal debates also largely fizzled out and what mattered was a sound basis for practical problems of *fiqh*.

It was this process which saw an increasing emphasis on the development of dogma and associated law that emphasized the role of Jâbir b. Zayd and Ibn 'Abbâs as founding fathers and promoted Abû 'Ubayda as their successor. And that in turn made it desirable to demonstrate that the two streams of *shirâ*' and dogma were united as early as possible, which is (p.175) one of the reasons that the Ibn Ibâd of 64 is a useful figure for the Ibâdis, as well as the classical heresiographers. And it also explains why the *K. Abi Sufyân* tries to make out to the Maghribis that no one made a *khurûj* without first consulting Abû 'Ubayda, even though we know he opposed the original uprising. But the author has to admit they consulted others, and the chief of these was Ḥâjib al-Ṭâ'iy, whose name he almost always links with that of Abû 'Ubayda. Indeed, he is even forced to concede that he had more prestige and standing (*hayba*) and was more feared, and that Abû 'Ubayda himself referred people to him. And it was Ḥâjib, he further recognizes, who organized the Basran end of Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq's uprising. Further evidence of this may be found in an extant letter in which Ḥâjib calls on the Ibâdis to prepare for *jihâd*, and in his correspondence with Abû'l-Ḥurr 'Ali b. al-Ḥuşayn al-'Anbari, the leader of the delegation to 'Umar II who subsequently became involved in the Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq uprising.<sup>32</sup> Ḥâjib clearly remained the prominent figure right through to the first attempt to set up an Imamate in Oman, and his name goes on being cited with that of Abû 'Ubayda until his death. Thus, in Abû Sufyân's letter to the Omanis, he tells how al-Julandâ b. Mas'ûd referred a problem jointly to Abû 'Ubayda, Ḥâjib, and the *fuqahâ'*, and if this is the same case as discussed in Chapter 8 (that of granting *amân* to a group of rebels whose blood was deemed forfeit), then it is interesting to note that though it was referred to both leaders, it was Ḥâjib who issued the ruling. Subsequently, we read that Abû 'Ubayda and Ḥâjib were not prepared to get involved in the aftermath of the family feud that resulted from al-Julandâ's Imamate.<sup>33</sup> And in the all-important early debate concerning free will and predestination (Chapter 7), it was Ḥâjib who took the lead and in the end wrote a joint policy *sira* with Abû 'Ubayda on the issue. There are also extant joint letters to the Ibâdis of Tripoli, and to the Omanis after the overthrow of al-Julandâ's Imamate on various matters,<sup>34</sup> while Ḥâjib<sup>35</sup> himself wrote various letters and epistles, quoted in the first great Omani *fiqh* compilation, the *Jâmi' Ibn Ja'far*, notably over *shahâda*.

---

Indeed, I would argue that it was only after the Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq 'Imamate', when doctrine and political activation really had to go hand in hand, that Abû 'Ubayda started to emerge as the leading *faqih*, and it was not until after Ḥâjib's death that Abû 'Ubayda's position really became established. Even then, he was no more than a teacher—true, a great teacher and the most prominent *faqih* to whom all turned, but that **(p.176)** remained his role in the propagation of Ibâdism; the real activator of the missions was his pupil al-Rabî' b. Ḥabîb, who represented in his own person the two aspects of the *da'wa, shirâ'*, as exemplified by Abû Bilâl, and *fiqh*, as exemplified by Jâbir b. Zayd. Furthermore, it is to be noted that while Abû Sufyân links the name of Abû 'Ubayda and Ḥâjib as a sort of joint leadership, he never makes them Imams. In his letters to the Hadramis and Omanis he makes a firm distinction between Imams and other important early Ibâdi figures. 'Our *ḥukm* (for the Hadramis, our *qawl* for the Omanis) is that of our Imams, Abû Bilâl Mirdâs, 'Abdullâh b. Yaḥyâ (Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq), Abû Ḥamza Mukhtâr b. 'Awf, al-Julandâ b. Mas'ûd. They are our predecessors, those with whom we associate (our beloved), our imams (*salafunâ, wa-awliyâ'unâ wa-â'immatunâ*).' It will be noted that this list includes Abû Ḥamza, who was in fact subordinate to Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq. What is being raised to this highest level in fact is *shirâ'*. And it is only in the next paragraph that he speaks of Abû 'Ubayda, whom he simply describes as one of our *ulamâ'* (*wa kân min 'ulamâ qawminâ*). Pretty insulting for the number two in the Ibâdi hierarchy!

And if doubt still subsists, then one may refer elsewhere in his letter to the Hadramis where he lists eleven names of 'our predecessors', starting with Mirdâs, Jâbir, Ḍumâm, Abû 'Ubayda (wait for it!) 'Abdullâh b. al-Qâsim, that is, Abû 'Ubayda al-Ṣaghîr, the merchant of the China trade who helped finance the movement; Abû 'Ubayda al-Kabîr does not even feature in this enumeration. Furthermore, when eventually he is mentioned it is really to signal he was the main teacher of al-Rabî' b. Ḥabîb. That is certainly true and confirmed by al-Rabî' himself, according to the *K. Abi Sufyân*.<sup>36</sup> When asked, 'from whom did you hear this?' he replied 'I acquired (verb *ḥafaz*) my *fiqh* from three people, Abû 'Ubayda; and Abû Nûḥ and Ḍumâm.' No mention of Jâbir! That statement places Abû 'Ubayda in his real position, as the figure who is the intermediary for al-Rabî' to transmit from Jâbir in the rationalized view of Ibâdi development. Al-Rabî' might have learnt some things in his youth direct from Ḍumâm and Abû Nûḥ (we do not know when they died), but what he learnt was essentially from Abû 'Ubayda. And Abû 'Ubayda, as we have seen, is the intermediary to Jâbir's Ibâdi pupil Ḍumâm. There is confirmation of this in an interesting aside by Abû 'Abdullâh, where he reports that it is said that some of the general population of Basra started trying to collect *isnâds* from whomever they could. At first they found al-Rabî' willing to recount to them what Ḍumâm had from Jâbir from Ibn 'Abbâs, but when he realized how casually they were recording it, he shut his door on them and would only see his brethren from the **(p.177)** Muslims (i.e. the Ibâdis).<sup>37</sup> Once again evidence that Abû 'Ubayda's position has been exalted to promote the monolinear model of Ibâdi origins which runs Jâbir › Abû 'Ubayda › al-Rabî' and excludes Ḍumâm and his generation.

So, I suggest, it is al-Rabî' who becomes the key figure after Ḥâjib died, for he was both a *mufti* and an activist (*shâri*), the man who conjoined ' *aml wa qawl* and really started to organize missionary activities in Oman after the Imam al-Julandâ was killed, possibly even returning there as a missionary himself (cf. Chapter 8). It is possible, too, that he early became involved in the

---



activation of the movement in the Maghrib, if Abû 'Ubayda's role remained essentially that of teacher. He certainly developed considerable influence there, as we shall see. Concerning the instruction of the missionaries, however, there is no doubt of Abû 'Ubayda's authority, both with respect to the Omanis and the Maghribis. The North African missionaries trained under him, and there is a rather charming story of how one of them, Ibn Darrâr, posed a series of 300 legal problems before leaving and was gently mocked when his teacher asked whether he was planning on becoming a qadi.<sup>38</sup>

So, to sum up, Abû 'Ubayda is a somewhat ambivalent figure, not altogether unlike that other Tamîmi personage who features at a turning-point in rationalizing the Ibâḍi movement, 'Abdullâh Ibn Ibâḍ. Just as Ibn Ibâḍ came to represent the birth of the movement when the Khârijis fragmented, so Abû 'Ubayda came to represent the man around whom the movement supposedly consolidated when the 'Ibâḍi' activists organized themselves as a *da'wa*, providing firm guidance over matters of doctrine, theology, and *fiqh*, which he had learnt from his master Jâbir b. Zayd, as well as over *shirâ'* and *khurûj*. All the detailed evidence from the Mashriqi sources belies this interpretation and shows its inconsistencies. And in the Omani sources, it is al-Rabî' who features as the real key figure after Jâbir, not Abû 'Ubayda.

#### 'The Great Arabian Revolt'

But before examining his generation and the establishment of full Imamates, let us first complete the story of the activation of the movement with that of the great uprising in south-west Arabia, which represented the true spirit of *shirâ'*, as exemplified last by Abû Bilâl nearly seven decades earlier, and then finally return to Jâbir, who apparently founded the basis of the doctrine of the Ibâḍi school (*aṣl al-madhhab*).

In reality this term adopted by Crone and Zimmermann for the first Ibâḍi Imamate established by Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq and Abû Hamza is something (**p.178**) of a misnomer. The taking of the Holy Cities may have been sensational, but was in fact conducted by a small number of ill-equipped fervent youths who made an extraordinary coup in the name of a person subsequently designated as an Imam, but in fact probably called *Amîr al-Mu'minîn*, and who adopted the sobriquet of Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq, the Seeker of Right/Truth/Justice. Without doubt it was an opportunistic move, exploiting the disturbed conditions that followed the murder of the Caliph Walîd II and the succession of Marwân II in Damascus (127/744), and which the Shaybânî 'Ṣufri' also exploited in what was effectively a civil war in Iraq (as too the beginnings of the 'Abbasid revolt in Khurâsân). The Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq uprising was an entirely 'Yamani' affair which exploited both tribal anti-Umayyad sentiment and the fact that Marwân II relied entirely on Qaysi (Muḍar) support, coupled to the specific situation in southern Arabia which had suffered from both Sufyanid and Marwanid rule, starting with Busr's campaign, and followed by the harsh and unjust government of the Thaqafis. That the motivation of those involved was not entirely directed by religious fervour is shown by various elements of the story, at least as related by Ṭabari, which fairly clearly indicate revenge against Quraysh and the Hijazi establishment.

As already indicated, the raw material for a militancy that could be channelled into a doctrinal cause lay in the defeat of the two great revolts of Yamani tribal leaders. Both represented tribal groupings southern Arabian in origin, the Kinda, whose homeland was in the region of

Hadramawt and al-Shiḥr but with important sections living in Oman, and the Azd tribes, present in south-west Arabia, Hadramawt, al-Shiḥr, as well as Oman. Not to be underestimated also are the southern Ṭayy. Abû Mawdûd Ḥâjib was a Ṭâ'iy, Abû Nûḥ Şâliḥ al-Dahhân lived in the Ṭayy quarter, while al-Khayyâr b. Sâlim is another early Ṭâiy figure from Oman, a *faqîh* from the period of Abû 'Ubayda.<sup>39</sup> Khârijism had been dominated by Tamîm and Bakr b. Wâ'il figures and revolts, and it was hardly likely that these Yamanis crying for vengeance were going to be inspired by a Tamîmi *mawlâ*, a mere *qaffâf* (basket-weaver)<sup>40</sup> cowering in his cellar. Azd and Tamîm simply did not mix, and their recent history had made them the bitterest of enemies. So it was amongst the Hadramis and the Omanis that the proto-Ibâḍis set to work to inspire an uprising based on the fundamental principles exhibited by the early Muḥakkima.

But something more vigorous than the ideology of *shirâ'* in the name of *Kitâb Allâh wa sunnat al-nabî* was required to recruit young warriors (p.179) ready to sacrifice their lives: the chance to avenge their earlier humiliations and defeat. I will not go quite so far as to say that Ibâḍism was the Yamani equivalent of Şufrism, but there is certainly a highly important element of tribal and regional loyalty involved in the two movements. The Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq uprising was a purely Yamani affair, as too the shortlived succeeding Imamate of al-Julandâ b. Mas'ûd in Oman, while the first Ibâḍis who tried to counteract Şufri dogma in North Africa were Hadrami s (Chapter 7). As already indicated, the Şufri were only portrayed as being located somewhere between the extremist Azâriqa and the moderate Ibâḍis because they were activists: which is perhaps why the (brothers?) Hilâl and Shabîb b. 'Aṭiyya, who were to the fore in establishing al-Julandâ b. Mas'ûd as Imam in Oman, have nevertheless been marked as having Şufri tendencies.<sup>41</sup> Once the Ibâḍis themselves activated, that difference in dogma, in so far as it existed, disappeared. Indeed, I would even tentatively suggest that one of the reasons that the Tamîmi Abû 'Ubayda is promoted in Abû Sufyân's account for the Maghribis is to de-Yamanize the early Ibâḍi uprisings outside the Arabian arena. Which is why in his letter to the Omanis he also uses the term Muḥakkima to designate the true believers, saying they were one, whether from the Maghrib or the Mashriq. By such means the *da'wa* developed a carapace of universalism.

But the fact is, that our first activists were South Arabian Azd, Kinda, Ṭayy, Hamdân, 'Abd al-Qays; and they hated Quraysh. Shabîb b. 'Aṭiyya, a contemporary of this period and who was with al-Julandâ b. Mas'ûd, ends his *Sîra* by nominating them as the most detestable *jabâbira*, the mightiest and blackest oppression (*ḡalama*) along with those who follow them in their oppression. And the key figure behind the uprising was Ḥâjib al-Ṭâ'iy. One of Abû Sufyân's named sources, al-Mulayḥ, then a young man, recounts how he and an Omani went to Ḥâjib's *majlis* one night and found Mukhtâr b. 'Awf with two or three of the *mashâyikh* there. Ḥâjib sent the pair of them to get Balj b. 'Uqba. It was clearly an important meeting, although al-Mulayḥ does not say what they discussed (perhaps he was kept out of earshot), for they talked all night and unusually each speaker got to his feet to address the others.

Abû Ḥamza Mukhtâr b. 'Awf of the B. Sâlima,<sup>42</sup> and Balj b. 'Uqba, a Farâhîdi who was from the same clan as al-Rabî' b. Ḥabîb, originated from Majazz, close to Sohar. All three were Mâlik b. Fahm, from clans who came late to Basra and had formed the backbone of the Muhallabid (p. 180) forces. So Ḥâjib al-Ṭâ'iy worked on the merchants to stump up sufficient funds to provide arms for the uprising and in the process burdened himself with debt, which was redeemed by

---

one of the Omani merchants. The merchant community was, of course, very important in Basra, and included many Omanis. Not only had they suffered from restrictions placed on Gulf trade by the authorities, but also their social position was not high. Although *qa'ada*, they were nevertheless prepared to put their wealth behind the movement. One of the more interesting of them is Abû 'Ubayda 'Abdullâh b. al-Qâsim (Abû 'Ubayda al-Şaghîr), who originated from Bisyâ in interior Oman and had actually gone to China, according to the *K. Abi Sufyân*. Another China merchant who helped the early Ibâdis in the period of al-Rabî' and Abû Ayyûb Wâ il b. Ayyûb al-Hadrami was al-Nazar b. Maymûn.<sup>43</sup>

Ibâdi propaganda had been directed at Mecca for some time, and all the Ibâdi leaders made enormous efforts to go on the Hajj, preferably each year. According to Ṭabari's account, Abû Ḥamza had been particularly outspoken there against the Marwânids and had once been whipped for what he said. Seemingly he had been overheard by the Hadrami, 'Abdullâh b. Yaḥyâ Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq, who proposed he return home with him; Ibâdi versions imply it was Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq who contacted the Bas-rans.<sup>44</sup> So Balj raised a force of a 1,000, probably recruited in the Omani region amongst the ex-Muhallabid soldiers and from his own clan (which also lived on the Persian coast), and almost certainly marched overland to join him. 'Abdullâh b. Yaḥyâ himself<sup>45</sup> was from al-Ḥarîth al-Aşghar, the same Kinda grouping as Ibn al-Ash'ath, but from the al-Ḥârîth Wallâda clan to which his rivals the Walî'a belonged. A pious and learned man, he had been appointed qadi by the local governor ('*âmil*), Ibrâhîm b. Jabala al-Kindi, who was answerable to the Umayyad governor for the Greater Yemen region, al-Qâsim/Quwaysim b. 'Umar. He had already been in contact with Abraha b. Sharâḥîl b. al-Şabâḥ al-Ḥimyari,<sup>46</sup> and now with **(p.181)** the support of Abû Ḥamza, and the 20-year-old Balj, he successfully rebelled against the Hadrami governor. The combined army of 1,600 then marched against Quwaysim, who opposed his force with 30,000, clearly an exaggeration. Success went to the insurgents, who established 'Abdullâh b. Yaḥyâ as Imam in Şan'â'. In his sermon he emphasized the basis of true Muslim rule, the Qur'ân, the Sunna of the Prophet, and the 'Forbidding Wrong'<sup>47</sup> ('*amr bi'l ma'rûf*) principle.

It is now that the bold coup to march on the Holy Cities during the Hajj season of 129/747 was put into effect by Abû Ḥamza. With a small, ill-equipped force of Omanis and Hadramis he entered Mecca before the pilgrims had gone to 'Arafa, and the local governor, frightened of a panic, made a truce with them through the intermediaries of various leading Quraysh figures, including descendants of the first two Caliphs, guaranteeing mutual safety until they had returned from Minâ. The Ibâdi contingent in turn set out as a group for Mount 'Arafa. After the pilgrims had returned the governor took flight with them, abandoning the city to the insurgents. Both the Ibâdi and the classical sources agree on the small size of the 'Khârîji' force, some 400 ('abari), or 600 (*K. Abi Sufyân* in Darjîni). But it is clear that Abû Ḥamza was counting on some support from contacts he had made earlier, and perhaps even from some pilgrim groups, and the Umayyad governor was aware of the danger. This became apparent in the next stage, the move on Madina.

Here again the classical and Ibâdi sources largely concur. According to Abû Sufyân, Abû Ḥamza was joined by a force of 400 Azdi Khuzâ'a. Whether the Ibâdi leader had played on local jealousies or even the Azd connection (there was a clan of Khuzâ'a living in Oman<sup>48</sup>), the fact is that it was in their territory, at Qudayd, between Mecca and Madina, that the Qurashi forces in

---

control of Madina did battle, having refused the obligatory call to obey God's Book and the Sunna of his Prophet, rather than the rule of the Marwânids, and were defeated, losing 700 killed according to a report in Ṭabari. Other of his reports quoted indicate that the Khuzâ'a had betrayed them, and one story makes clear that the Yaman-Quraysh conflict was very much a feature of the battle and aftermath. Certainly it was the 'fanaticism' of the young *shurât* that also played a vital role. This is brought out by Abû Ḥamza's subsequent sermon.<sup>49</sup>

Know, O people of Madînah that we did not leave our homes and our possessions lightly or carelessly ... [W]e heard a herald (*dâ'i*) calling us to obey the Merciful (p.182) Lord and the rule of the Qur'ân ... We came forward from scattered tribes, a group of us on one camel carrying ourselves and our supplies, sharing one blanket among ourselves, little people, held as weak on earth; and He received us and aided us by His succour, and we all became brothers to each other, by God, through His grace ... // O People of Madînah, it has reached me that you belittle my comrades. You say they are callow young men, barefoot Bedouins. Alas for you, O people of Madînah! What were the followers of Messenger of God, God bless him and give him peace, but callow young men? Youths, by God, who were fully mature in their youth...

But the outcome was inevitable: 4,000 Syrians and a further 1,000 rather reluctant Iraqis, were dispatched under the command of Ibn 'Aṭīyya, 'Abd al-Malik b. Muḥammad b. 'Aṭīyya (of the B. Sa'd b. Bakr). Balj and the Ḥimyari leader advanced to encounter them and the Ibâḍis were massacred in a battle in the Wadi Qura, just three months after Qudayd. Ibn 'Aṭīyya then moved on Mecca, held by Abû Ḥamza (*Yawm Makka*), whose crucified body was left as a gruesome warning for many months. Finally it was the turn of Ṣan'â' where Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq had marched out with his supporters, and his head was sent to Damascus. Now, however, Ibn 'Aṭīyya had to carry the war into the main Yamani territory and he met stiff resistance, particularly from the Ḥimyar and Hamdân, who had probably not been particularly concerned by the Ibâḍi revolt but were the sworn enemies of the Caliph. Ibn 'Aṭīyya then took the war into Hadramawt, where he inflicted a defeat on the Ibâḍis who had taken refuge in Shibâm, but they were saved from further massacre by his being summoned back to lead the Pilgrimage of 130/748, and concluded a truce with them. En route his party was massacred, all except for one who managed to make out he was a Hamdâni and was consequently received with effusion. His nephew, whom he had left as governor of Ṣan'â', exacted revenge and the entire population was probably only saved from the ensuing massacre by the fall of the Umayyad dynasty.

As a postscript, it is worth noting what happened there. The militants had imprisoned 'Abdullâh b. Sa'id, appointed by Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq as his deputy when he moved to Ṣan'â', in favour of a *shâri* leader Khanbash.<sup>50</sup> Their dispute was taken up by the leading Hadrami who had gone to live in Basra,<sup>51</sup> the future 'successor' to al-Rabî', Abû Ayyûb Wâ'il b. Ayyûb, who arranged for Ḥâjib al-Ṭâ'iy to come during the Hajj and arbitrate. Suffering from a major ophthalmia and clearly in a foul temper, he came down most decidedly on the side of moderation and told the militants to get out of the Hadramawt without a moment's delay. The new '*difâ'i*' (p.183) Imam<sup>52</sup> did not last long, however. Around 142/760 Abû Ja'far Manṣûr decided to bring Yemen firmly under 'Abbasid control and break the Rabî'a alliance with the Yamanis, and appointed Ma'n b. Zâ'ida al-Shaybâni (note the tribal affiliation) governor. Under guise of suppressing the rebels, Ma'n employed his largely Nizâri troops to massacre reportedly 15,000 Hadramis and extirpate this nest of Qaḥṭâni heretics. In 151/768 he was sent to deal with the 'Khawârij' of Seistan, where, as

we have seen, two Hadramis taking revenge assassinated him. Yemen again more or less lapsed into a backwater and in the thirty-five years following his departure there were no less than eighteen different governors at Ṣan'â'.<sup>53</sup>

### Jâbir B. Zayd

#### Perspective on the proto-Ibâdi period

We have now bracketed Jâbir b. Zayd, the figure the Ibâdis themselves set up as the real founder of their movement, and can target him to see if he is perhaps another decoy, rather as Ibn Ibâḍ and even Abû 'Ubayda have proved to be. Our first attempts to find the role-model for Ibâdi activism highlighted Abû Bilâl, the leader of the last right-guided series of early Muḥakkima revolts to whose call the *qa'ada* failed to respond, and who became the exemplar of true *shirâ'* for future generations, including those Tamîmi and Shaybânî revolts that have been labelled Ṣufri. The first real Ibâdi revolt, on the other hand, was Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq. Between them is a gap of some seventy years, that is, two generations.

It was filled by what I have termed the proto-Ibâdis, and it was during this gestation period that Ibâdism found a certain coherence. This was later rationalized and formalized, a century and more onwards, as the likes of Abû Sufyân, or rather more probably Abû Ṣufra, tried to bring order, so as to explain for the Maghribis what in fact were disordered beginnings. In reassessing these, it has been shown that Abû 'Ubayda took a less prominent role than is made out by the late Maghribi sources. Although he has not disappeared in the same way as the eponymous Ibn Ibâḍ, he emerges as a—possibly the—leading *faqîh* when missionary activities to North Africa started; but his subsequent promotion in Ibâdi historiography is essentially to give structure to that amorphous period. So he came to serve as the essential link between two key figures in the Basran Ibâdi leadership (both Omani Azd), Jâbir b. Zayd, whose *ra'y* Ibn (p.184) Ibâḍ followed, as Shammâkhi puts it, and al-Rabî' b. Ḥabîb, whose supposed *ḥadîth* collection emerged in an 'Arrangement' (*Tartîb*) by a sophisticated Maghribi Ibâdi scholar, Abû Ya'qûb al-Warjlâni, who died 400 years after al-Rabî'. So necessary is the link Abû 'Ubayda-Jâbir as primarily recorded by al-Rabî' in his *Musnad*, that it ends up with a transmission line of 742 *ḥadîth* direct Abû 'Ubayda ( Jâbir b. Zayd, with sixty-eight coming from 'A'isha, forty from Anas b. Mâlik, sixty from Abû Sa'îd al-Khudri, seventy-two from Abû Hurayra and a whopping 150 from Ibn 'Abbâs, plus 184 *marâsîl* transmissions from Jâbir and eighty-eight, from Abû 'Ubayda.

Certainly al-Rabî' was a pupil of Abû 'Ubayda and a considerable *faqîh* in his own rights, as shown by what he recorded from his teachers and his own *futyâ* that make up his *Âthâr* (see below). But his real importance lies in the fact that he was an activist, the key figure in promoting the Imamate in Arabia after the Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq and Julandâ b. Mas'ûd failures, and he was the leading Basran figure when the Rustamid Imamate was established in the Maghrib. In the Omani tradition Abû 'Ubayda is treated as a secondary figure, and as will be shown in Chapters 12 and 14, 'Awtabi's formal *ḥamalât al-'ilm* transmission line ignores him and, despite the obvious anachronism, actually has al-Rabî' as the direct transmitter from Jâbir.

But whatever the intermediary chain, the key figure to whom the Ibâdis look, both in the Maghrib and the Mashriq for the real origins of their movement, is Jâbir b. Zayd himself.

### Jâbir as a *mufti*

So the first question that arises is, what do we actually know of Jâbir?<sup>54</sup> There is a report, originating, it seems, from Abû Sufyân's son Abû 'Abdullâh, that Abû 'Ubayda said he was from the Quḍâ'a, not exactly a genealogy to be vaunted, as Mas'ûdi<sup>55</sup> wittily points out in his skit on the tribes. Another report vigorously denies it, stating that it is attested by reliable Muslims that he was a Yaḥmadi from Firq.<sup>56</sup> Quḍâ'a origins by no means precludes his coming from Firq; indeed, it makes rather better sense tribally, for this was not an area of Yaḥmad settlement. Nor am **(p.185)** I claiming that this promotion of Jâbir was simply a matter of 'out with the Tamîmis and in with the Azdis'. But it would certainly do no harm if the founder of the movement should turn out to be a member of the powerful Yahmad (Shanu'a Azd) who effectively appropriated the Imamate in Oman (Chapter 8).

However, let us accept that he was an Azdi, of ('Umar) b. Yaḥmad origins who was born at Firq (not far from Nizwâ) in the Jawf (whence his Jawfi *nisba*, not the Basran Jawf); his *kunya*, Abû Sha'thâ', apparently refers to his daughter whose grave is still known there. He is also stated to have been blind in one eye. For the cynical, his birth-date of 21 (variant 18) may be taken with a pinch of salt, if his commonly cited death-date of 103 were correct. If he is to frequent (*drk*) and transmit from the likes of Ibn 'Abbâs and 'Â'isha, he has to have been born sufficiently early, in the same way as his contemporary, Anas b. Mâlik, the last Basran Companion who reportedly died between 91 and 93, must have been extremely old, if he indeed had been of an age to have served in the household of the Prophet. Admittedly, Jâbir was not so Methuselah-like, but a degree of care needs to be taken about old men who defy senility and appear as active teachers in a society of which the Prophet reputedly said that the average age of 'my community' is 50 to 60 and a few will reach 70.<sup>57</sup> Nevertheless, if Jâbir's death-date of 93 is indeed correct, which is most probable (see below), then a lifespan of seventy or so years is plausible.

Bakkûsh has found one *riwâya* of Jâbir's from his father, which may be an indication that Zayd came with the first main contingent of Azd from Tawwaj. Jâbir acquired great influence in Basra, and became a good friend of Yazîd b. Abi Muslim, Hajjaj's secretary. Yazîd himself was suspected of being a 'Khâriji', but he was close to the Thaqafi governor and had a reputation for cruelty; sacked by Sulaymân and disgraced by 'Umar II, he was rehabilitated by Yazîd II, closely related to Hajjaj by marriage, who gave him an appointment in North Africa, where he was killed in 102/719-20 for his repressive actions.<sup>58</sup> Hajjaj actually offered Jâbir a formal post as judge, but he declined and instead accepted a sinecure in the *dîwân al-muqâtila*, drawing a very comfortable salary of 600 or 700 dirhams.<sup>59</sup> His real influence was as one immersed in the scholarship of Islam, who regularly made the Hajj, and knew many of the early prominent figures of the Meccan school. It was this authority that gave him the status of *mufti* and teacher, a role he also reputedly shared with his friend al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri. Abû 'Abdullâh (Muḥammad b. Maḥbûb) puts the **(p.186)** relationship between the two in a nutshell: Jâbir was *afqah* than al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri and *afḍal* than him (i.e. a better jurist and more worthy), but al-Ḥasan was for the 'amma and Jâbir for the *qawm* and had greater influence (*qadr*) over the people of his period. In other words, al-Hasan was the popular figure, but Jâbir's influence really lay with the learned. The essential feature to retain in all this is that he was a prominent jurist.

The question, of course, is: was he an Ibâdî? As such, the question is largely meaningless because it presumes that an 'Ibâdî' identity had already emerged. As previously stated, his vigorous denials detailed by the traditionist Ibn Sa'd simply indicate that the author was aware of the Ibâdî claim to his being a founding father, and so he produces evidence for denying it.<sup>60</sup> Ibn Sa'd's life (b. Basra 168/784, d. Baghdad 230/845), it might be noted, more or less coincides with Abû Sufyân's. In any case, Jâbir would have denied it since, as the *Kashf* puts it, *kân mukhtafiy<sup>an</sup> fi'ayyâm al-kitmân. Taqiyya* (permitted religious dissimulation) and *kitmân* (secrecy) conveniently cover all situations. More to the point is, perhaps, to ask: was he a Khâriji of some sort? Well one thing is certain; he did not participate in any Khâriji revolt and was conveniently away at Firq when Abû Bilâl seceded. The statement in the *Kashf*, that Abû Bilâl wrote to him in Oman asking his view, for the believers would not operate without his approval, is probably no more than an attempt to reinforce the link between the two names, one the *shâri*, the other the *qâ'id*, in the same way that the pair of them reportedly heard 'Â'isha's confession over the Battle of the Camel.<sup>61</sup> No mention of that in Sâlim b. Dhakwân (§§59, 92) who gets around her posthumous support for 'Uthmân by simply omitting her name and putting all the blame on Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr. No *tawba* in his version! Abû Qaḥṭân likewise blames these two, but does have a considerable section on 'Â'isha's repentance, but with absolutely no reference to Jâbir or Abû Bilâl, or anyone else that can vaguely be considered as Ibâdî. On the other hand, that Jâbir and Abû Bilâl would have known and consulted each other as prominent figures in Basra is more than likely, and in a *sîra* written by Abû 'Ubayda (see Bibliography) he recounts how the pair prayed together at dead of night, again illustrating Jâbir's essential caution in not being seen as associated with anyone who was a potential political activist. And it is possible that if Jâbir really had been worried by 'Ubaydallâh b. Ziyâd's hard line which led to Abû Bilâl's *khurûj* and was afraid he was going to be arrested, he may indeed have thought it a good idea to disappear to his homeland for a while.

**(p.187)** It is also possible that Jâbir was imprisoned at some stage, for Ibn Sa'd recounts that it was said he was asked for *fatwas* even when in prison. And that may have taught him a lesson, for everything points to the fact that Jâbir was very careful not to say anything about *shirâ'* or *khurûj*. To get round this the *K. Abi Sufyân* once again uses Oman as a useful bolt-hole for having Jâbir off the scene in Hajjaj's time, saying in his account to the Maghribis that he was banished there along with his own greatgrandfather, Hubayra.<sup>62</sup> That, I suspect, is meant to tell us rather more about Abû Sufyân's own family than Jâbir, for it only features in the Maghribi sources. The Âl Ruḥayl were not entirely popular amongst the hard-core '*ulamâ'*' in Oman (see Chapter 9), and it may well be that Abû Sufyân tried to enhance the family status. It is just possible that Hajjaj did banish those whom he suspected of any Khâriji sympathies after he conquered Oman, or even that Jâbir himself thought it discreet to move away from Basra provisionally. But he died back in Basra, and if Abû 'Ubayda's date of 93 is correct that would be while Hajjaj was still governor.<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, we may contrast this mild exile, if exile there was, with the savage treatment supposedly meted out to Ḍumâm and Abû 'Ubayda when he reportedly imprisoned them.

Jâbir's discretion went to the point of stating nothing that appeared to support rebellions, Khâriji or otherwise. According to one account, as given by Bakkûsh, he disapproved of the *fitnas* of both Ibn al-Ash'ath and Yazîd b. al-Muhallab (this must have been posthumously if he died in 93

or 96!), but he was pushed reluctantly to admit that even the *Amîr al-Mu'minîn* could be guilty of *fitna*. Reinforcing this is the fact that Jâbir seems to have approved of Murji'ite doctrine. One of the best-known of Jâbir's transmitters, 'Amr b. Dînâr (d. 126), says he read the epistle of Ḥasan b. Muḥammad (i.e. the *K. al-Irjâ'*) to him and he commented: 'There is nothing I approve that he disapproves, and nothing that I disapprove that he approves.' Considering that Jâbir was supposedly an Ibâḍi and, as Sâlim b. Dhakwân makes more than clear, Murji'ite doctrine was anathema, Cook<sup>64</sup> can only come up with the weak explanation of *taqiyya*, though quite why Jâbir should dissimulate over such doctrine when it was far from being official he does not try and explain (a *fortiori* since many Murji's joined Ibn al-Ash'ath's rebellion). For me, this is further evidence that Jâbir, even if sympathetic to Muhakkima ambitions, had a pacifist approach to reform, and accepted a doctrine whose purpose was **(p.188)** essentially to calm spirits about the early *fitna*, even though the early Murji'is by no means condoned the existing regime. Apocryphal or not, all this material indicates that Jâbir himself was a quietist.

So if he was not advocating *shirâ'* and disapproved of *fitan*, what does it mean to say that he was a secret Ibâḍi or at least a sympathizer? Only one thing: *lâ ḥukm illâ lillâh*. That, in the abstract was totally unexceptionable, albeit not in its application to 'Uthmân and the Umayyads. Even Hajjaj could not object to the basic notion that the guiding principle of Islamic government was *Kitâb Allâh* and the *Sunna*. And it was, of course, his knowledge of the *sunna* which made Jâbir the figure he was for Ibâḍis and non-Ibâḍis alike. From his assertions Francesca<sup>65</sup> has argued that he did not distinguish between the legal speculations of the Companions and what they transmitted from the Prophet. So the Ibâḍi sources emphasize how, making the Pilgrimage every year, he reputedly became a confidant of 'Â'isha (d. 58), and transmitted from the likes of Abû Hurayra (d. 58 or 59), Anas b. Mâlik (d. 91-3), Abû Sa'ûd al-Khudri (d.63) and seventy of those who had fought with the Prophet, but above all from Ibn 'Abbâs. What finer reference could he have than *al-Baḥr = baḥr al-'ulûm* of the Ibâḍis. The fact that Jâbir's opinions in fact have virtually no references to sources (see below), seems to be neither here nor there. Nor the fact that Ibn 'Abbâs was a *shi'i*, the man 'Ali would have liked to appoint as his arbitrator, who named his youngest son, born by his marriage to a Kinda princess on the day that 'Ali was murdered by a Khâriji extremist, in honour of the deceased Caliph,<sup>66</sup> nor that he was a Qurashi who became 'the father' of the 'Abbasid) Caliphs. What matters is that he was sympathetic to the Muhakkima and did his best to reconcile them. And in due course he supposedly broke with 'Ali.

So Jâbir became a highly influential figure in Basra, respected by all as a *faqîh* and teacher: by all, it should be repeated. Basing himself on Ibâḍi and non-Ibâḍi sources, Bakkûsh has traced 101 names of those reported to have related directly from him. Of these he has been unable to trace 28, but none features in Ibâḍi sources, as far as I can ascertain. There were just three men who were definitely (proto-)Ibâḍis: Dumâm, Abû Nûḥ Sâlih al-Dahhân, and Abû 'Ubayda (but see above); plus a highly dubious al-Rabî' as a young man, and a couple of Muhallabid women who reputedly became Ibâḍis, 'Atîka bt. Abi Şufra and Hind bt. al-Muhallab (who married and was divorced by Hajjaj). Equally interesting is the fact that there were also half a dozen establishment Azd, 'Atîk, Ḥuddân and Yaḥmad who related from him. Not surprising in the light of his tribal and Omani origins, but indicative that he had relations with non-(proto-)Ibâḍi Azd from clans whose influence was eventually to become of the **(p.189)** greatest importance in



mobilizing the Imamate. There are also some figures who might possibly have been 'Ibâḍis', like Ḥayyân b. al-A'raj al-Jawfi al-Baṣri, who features in the *Mudawwana*, while we will be coming across certain prominent transmitters who are acceptable, precisely because they recount what Jâbir said (Ayyûb b. Abi Tamîma Kaysân al-Sakhtiyâni, a source for Ibn Sîrîn, Thâbit b. Aslam al-Bannâni, for example).

So far, therefore, there is little indication that Jâbir was the guiding figure of what emerged as the Ibâḍi movement. So we need to look for further evidence to help decide. Perhaps the transmissions recorded by the Ibâḍis from him may help.

*Jâbir b. Zayd's futyâ: the Âthâr of al-Rabî' b. Ḥabîb and the Aqwâl Qatâda*

Jâbir himself apparently disliked having his opinions written down in case he wanted to change them, as Ennami points out, but nevertheless much of what he said was recorded by many pupils, as Bakkûsh has shown. The key Ibâḍi figure to do so seems to have been Ḍumâm. About the time that Abû Sufyân left Basra, Abû Şufra 'Abd al-Malik b. Şufra seems to have recorded the *futyâ* of the early leaders there and this became incorporated into what became known as the *Âthâr* of al-Rabî'. His *riwâya* are recounted by Abû Şufra, seemingly through an intermediary, al-Haytham (most probably Haytham b. 'Adi al-Ṭâ'iy, c. 120/758–206/821), a 'Khâriji' sympathizer who is also the person responsible for recording the Ibâḍi version of Abû Ḥamza al-Mukhtâr b. 'Awf's famous sermon.<sup>67</sup> Since Abû Şufra was still writing to Abû Sufyân's sons in the mid-230s (see chapter IX), it is difficult always to judge what may be additions or modifications of what Rabî' actually recounted.

Thanks to Dr. Werner Schwartz, I saw the copy of this work (part of a compendium entitled *al-Dîwân al-Ma'rûḍ 'alâ 'ulamâ' al-Ibâḍiyya* copied at Jerba in 1191/1777) that Ennami used, also seen by van Ess. This manuscript fairly clearly assembles what the Maghribi Ibâḍis could find at the time of its original compilation relevant to Jâbir's rulings (but not his **(p.190)** correspondence, see below), and includes the *Aqwâl Qatâda*, that is Qatâda b. D'iâma al-Sadûsi (60/680?-ca 117/735), the renowned pupil of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri, blind from birth and famous for his prodigious memory, who lived his life in Basra and took over the Qadariyya school from al-Ḥasan. There is more than one manuscript of the *Aqwâl Qatâda*, which according to Ennami divides into seven parts, but it is actually far from clear what is attributable to Qatâda.<sup>68</sup> That the *Aqwâl* are acceptable to the Ibâḍis is shown by the occasional comment that the opinion coincides with a respected Ibâḍi authority and the occasional *wa ḥaddathanî bi ḥâdhâ al-Rabî'*<sup>69</sup> which perhaps throws some doubts on van Ess's supposition that they were also recorded by Abû Ghânim, the reputed compiler of the *Mudawwana*, since we know he did not recount direct from al-Rabî'. No one is claiming that Qatâda was an Ibâḍi, but as van Ess points out there is a linkage to Jâbir. His *K. al-Şalât* is recounted by Ḥabîb b. Abi Ḥabîb al-Jarmi from 'Amr b. Harim al-Azdi al-Baṣri, and in the *Dîwân al-Ma'rûḍ* it forms part of the *Aqwâl*; in other manuscripts it follows straight on, according to Ennami. Part 5 of the *Aqwâl* on *nikâḥ* is also *riwâyât* from 'Amr b. Harim, while part 6 incorporates material from 'Amr b. Dînâr, whom we came across in connection with the *K. al-Irjâ'* and Jâbir. It is also worth noting that the *K. Abi Şufra* also quotes (though of course indirectly) Qatâda from Jâbir.

However, the principal interest of this compendium is al-Rabî's *Âthâr*, which fall into two parts, the *riwâya* and the *fatâwa*. As van Ess makes quite clear, and I would re-emphasize, this work has nothing to do with the *Musnad*. The first part of the *riwâya* concentrates on Jâbir's opinions and starts with what al-Rabî passed on from ʔumâm, although Abû Nûḥ also sometimes features. The ʔumâm section is presumably more or less the same as what was known to the Maghribi Ibâdis as *K. ʔumâm*. It does not necessarily follow that ʔumâm actually heard all that is recorded in his name, and the possibility should be borne in mind that he could have included material he picked up from others: the exact science of *ḥadîth* transmission had not yet been established! Then follows what other Ibâdis recorded from al-Rabî concerning Jâbir, including a few emanating from Abû 'Ubayda. It is not until the final two sources, Jumayyil al-Khawarzimi and Wâ'il b. Ayyûb, figures from the final quarter of the second century, that a source higher than Jâbir is quoted, when it is Ibn 'Abbâs.

Since I saw this work, al-Kharusi has edited al-Rabî's *riwâya* section of the *Âthâr* in this manuscript as a thesis.<sup>70</sup> But he says little about origins, follows the standard line that Jâbir was the founder of the Ibâdi school, **(p.191)** and apparently accepts that al-Rabî was on the Hajj with Jâbir, who he rightly insists died in 93, while at the same time proposing a death-date for him of 175-80/791-6 (van Ess suggests even later, between 180 and 190). Since Abû 'Ubayda died shortly after 150 that would mean that al-Rabî must have been well into his seventies when he became leader of the Basrans and died aged almost 100. Whilst I accept the possibility that al-Rabî might have been born in Jâbir's time (*adraka ḥayâtahu*), it was someone else who had been on the Hajj with him! And even then, if he died around 170 he must still have been pretty ancient.<sup>71</sup>

To raise such queries about the origins of the work, on the other hand, does not mean questioning its genuineness, although the likelihood of additions, mistakes in recording transmissions by both the author and the copyists, and even improvements should not be precluded. An obvious possibility is that the three anomalous direct transmissions from Jâbir by al-Rabî, which in any case come in the oddments at the end of the work, might well result from a failure to record an intermediary.

The following important conclusions may be drawn from the content of the *Âthâr*. The first concerns the nature of what has been transmitted from him. Virtually all are opinions, and whether of al-Rabî or Jâbir himself, are extremely brief, more or less on a yes-no reply or *lâ bâs* to the legal question posed. There is little or no evidence of the reasoning behind them and Kharusi has found only five allusions to the Qur'ân in the 324 opinions. Compare that to Sâlim b. Dhakwân, who has 362, as might be expected of someone in the Muḥakkima tradition. Although there are ten opinions apparently based on Prophetic traditions in the *Âthâr* (five according to Francesca in all that is attributed to al-Rabî), these may well simply form part of the 'Community sunna' in general circulation, while the fact that in one case Jâbir balances two potentially conflicting *dicta* to reach an opinion is more a matter of common sense than application of the specifically legal concept of *qiyâs*. Jâbir does not feature as a figure for *ḥadîth* transmissions in the major Sunni works: the two great Basran figures in transmission lines are al-Ḥasan al-Basri (although the attributions seem largely to be dubious) and Ibn Sîrîn, both of whom died in 110/728-9.<sup>72</sup>

---

The second is that while there may well be elements in his opinions which the Ibâḍis latched on to, like the peculiarity of only reciting the *fâtiḥa* at the *ẓuhr* and *'aṣr* prayers, as Kharusi points out, there are also at least five important sets of rulings in what survives from Jâbir that the Ibâḍis reject, according to Francesca. Even more significant is that al-Rabî's *Âthâr* make no mention of any political currents or movements of the age, Khawârij, Shi'a, Murji'a, or pro-Umayyad factions, nor the **(p.192)** legal prerequisites for caliphal office, nor *walâya* and *barâ'a*, nor dogma issues, *i'tizâl*, *irjâ'*, *qadar*, or *jabr*; nor *khurûj*, nor *hijra*, nor *jabâbira*, nor the status of misguided *ahl al-qibla*, nor anything else politically Ibâḍi, *a fortiori* if we look at those *âthâr* specifically transmitted from Jâbir.<sup>73</sup>

So the *Âthâr* provide rather negative evidence of Jâbir being a proto-Ibâḍi. Kharusi in fact puts the work into its proper perspective when he says: 'As can be seen from the Comments and Notes on the text, I was surprised with what I found when I compared the juristic material of the book, which is supposed to be an Ibâḍi based *fiqh* to that of Sunni *fiqh*. There is no single opinion of the early Ibâḍi authorities that is invented or irregular or contradicting the *fiqh* of mainstream Muslims ... [I]f we forget, for a moment that this is an Ibâḍi *fiqh* work, it is difficult to distinguish [it] from any other "moderate" Muslim school.' Quite! I suggest that if we omit the words 'for a moment', the essence of this work has been neatly summarized by this conclusion. The danger, as Francesca (2005) has similarly demonstrated with the *Aqwâl Qatâda*, is to retroject a conflictual identity between the proto-Ibâḍis and proto-Sunnis which simply did not exist at the time.

However, that does not preclude Jâbir being sympathetic to the *qa'ada* and possibly playing a more secret role in the origins of the Ibâḍi movement.

#### Jâbir b. Zayd in the early Omani sources

The early Omani sources do little to resolve the dilemma. The index of the two-volume collection of early Omani *siyar* edited by Kâshif appears to have many references to Jâbir, but once the editor's footnotes based on the standard version of Ibâḍi origins are removed there are only two Omani authors who mention him, both late: Ibn Baraka and his pupil al-Bisyâni/Bisyawi (mid-4/10<sup>th</sup> century). No mention at all of him in the *sîras*, advice, polemics, rebuttals, by Munîr b. al-Nayyir, Hâshim b. Ghaylân, Shabîb b. 'Aṭiyya, Abû Qaḥṭân, Abû'l-Mu'thir, Abû'l-Ḥawâri, the numerous collective opinions of *fuqahâ'* from the First Imamate and its aftermath, nor indeed from the time of the Second Imamate. And **(p.193)** above all, nothing in the long reply of Abû Sufyân's son, Abû 'Abdullâh, in a *sîra* advising a group of Maghribis about the nature of the Imamate (see Chapter 9). On the other hand, some explanation of this absence may lie in the fact that most such early material is characterized by omission of all reference to individuals, as is evidenced by Sâlim b. Dhakwân's epistle. What mattered was the collective opinion that made up the *âthâr*.

Ibn Baraka's mention is minimal: Jâbir simply appears in a long list of our *â'imma* (not 'Imams', but the leading worthies) that followed the Prophet. After the Muḥakkima section comes Imam of the Muslims 'Abdullâh b. Ibâḍ and the rest of the *â'immat al-Muslimîn*, Jâbir b. Zayd, Ṣuḥâr b. 'Abd, Ja'far b. al-Sammân, Ḥattât b. Kâtib, Abû 'Ubayda Muslim b. Abi Karîma, Abû Nûḥ Ṣâliḥ b. Nûḥ al-Dahhân; after which he moves onto Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq's generation. Al-Bisyâni's references

are entirely in the context of the development of the extreme Rustâq dogma concerning the deposing of al-Şalt b. Mâlik al-Kharûşi, in which he equates suspending judgement with the earlier debate concerning *shakk* (doubt) and the heresy of the Shu'aybiyya and Hârûn b. al-Yamân (see Chapter 7). In this, al-Bisyâni quotes Jâbir direct on one occasion. On another, he repeats Abû Sufyân's evidence that Jâbir prayed behind tyrants in order to repudiate Hârûn's heresy that it was illicit to do so, except that he also lists several other worthy early Muslims who did likewise. Other than these two references, we have Jâbir starting al-Bisyâni's rather interesting list of those '*ulamâ'*', from the time of Ibn Ibâd down to Mukhtâr b. 'Awf and 'Abdullâh b. Yaḥyâ [Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq], that is, from the supposed founding of the movement down to its first Imamate, the figures, he says, to whom the Ibâdis refer for defining their *da'wa* and *sîra*, who clarify *al-khabar*, make apparent *al-ḥujja* and the reliability of *al-sunna*, and all of whom abominated *shakk* and rejected the Shukkâk, the Shu'aybiyya, and the people of *irjâ'* (Murji'ites), as well as all the *jabâbira*: these he names as Jâbir b. Zayd, Abû 'Ubayda al-Akbar (Muslim b. Abi Karîma), Ḍumâm, Sâlim b. Dhakwân (yes, he), Abû'l-Ḥurr, al-Rabî', (A. Sufyân) Maḥbûb, Wâ'il b. Ayyûb, Khalaf b. Ziyâd (al-Baḥrani), Hilâl b. 'Aṭiyya, and others of their period.

So that is the sum total of what the Omanis say in these two volumes, and both authors mentioning Jâbir are late. By their time there is clearly an established list of the early authorities, and this eventually becomes incorporated in the *ḥamalât al-'ilm* lists that ends with the right-minded '*ulamâ'* of the Rustâq party (see Chapters 12 and 14). Nor is there any reference to Jâbir in the material contained in these volumes from Ibn Ibâd, Wâ'il b. Ayyûb, and Abû 'Ubayda al-Maghribi. That again is perhaps to be expected, since they too simply pronounce the collective opinion of the Ibâdis. The one exception is Abû Sufyân.

**(p.194)** So what do we learn from Abû Sufyân about Jâbir when he is writing to the Mashriq and not the Maghrib in his supposed *Kitâb*? In the first place he gives no source for what he says about Jâbir. It is either 'we are informed about' (*balaghanâ'an*) or 'it is said', or 'it is related', even though he quotes Abû 'Ubayda via al-Rabî', that is, his own teacher (whom he describes as *faqîhu'l-Muslimîn wa 'âlimuhum ba'da Abi 'Ubayda*), but never with any higher line of transmission. Nevertheless, Jâbir is certainly there amongst the worthies. In the context of repudiating Hârûn, Abû Sufyân's list of the sound *fuqahâ'*, '*ulamâ'*', and so on runs Jâbir, Abû Bilâl, Ḍumâm, Şâliḥ, Abû Nûḥ, Abû 'Ubayda, Ḥâjib, while he again features in another rather longer list of the *salaf al-şâliḥ* (pious ancestors). On another occasion when repudiating Hârûn, he says to look at the *sîra* of Hilâl b. 'Aṭiyya, the writings (*kutub*) of Jâbir (which certainly indicates that some of what Jâbir said had been written down by then), the writings of Khalaf b. Ziyâd (his *sîra* is extant). Other than that, Abû Sufyân reports two Jâbir opinions, one concerning the extent to which ignorance is permissible, the other a written reply to a letter from the Omanis who had asked about attendance at the Friday mosque when they were beyond the sound of the call to prayer. This is interesting, for it is a direct referral by the Omanis to Jâbir for an opinion, and as we shall see from his correspondence there were others; but that is by no means incompatible with his being the leading *mufti* of Basra. The third report is in the context of the Hârûn group's claim that it was illicit to pray behind tyrants. He specifically quotes how Jâbir prayed behind Ziyâd (b. Abîhi), 'Ubaydallâh, and Hajjaj.

---

None of the above indicates one way or the other that Jâbir was the founder of what might be termed an Ibâḍi *da'wa*, or even a school, beyond the fact that, like Abû Bilâl, he starts the list of those whom they consider as sound for 'ilm or as models. So if he was a founding father, his role has apparently simply been absorbed into the '*min al-âthâr*'.

#### A Khâriji sympathizer?

But there is one other mention of Jâbir in Abû Sufyân's letter to the Hadramis that really is interesting and may confirm the idea that he was at least was sympathetic to moderate Muḥakkima doctrine. It comes in the context of *ghanîma* and the treatment of other Muslims. Jâbir was told that Ziyâd al-A'sam, a Muslim of status and standing (*manzila wa faḍl*), was calling 'our *qawm*' polytheists, so Jâbir got them to have Ziyâd come and see him. Ziyâd's views showed he considered it perfectly consistent to recognize their legal rights, to eat with them, to marry them, and so on, but at the same time to consider them *mushrikîn*; some *ahl al-qibla* are banished from the *qibla* he pronounced. His essential reproach was (p.195) that their *dîn* was that of the Khawârij and anyone who did not treat them as *mushrikîn* was a *mushrik* like them. This Ziyâd is a bit of a puzzle,<sup>74</sup> and in the letter of the *fuqahâ'* to al-Ṣalt he is mentioned between Najda b. 'Atiyya and his splinter-groups and before Ṣâliḥ (b. Mussariḥ) and Shabîb (b. Yazîd); that would place him in the early 70/690s. What is clear from this list, which carries on with Ibn Bayhas, 'Abdullâh b. Ṣaffâr and the Ṣufriyya, the Jahmiyya, the Tha'labiyya, is that they all subscribe in some measure to the view that other Muslims are *mushrikûn*. What upset the proto-Ibâḍis in the case of Ziyâd, however, was not that he was himself one of the extremist Khâriji school, but that he deemed all Khâriji schools, including themselves, to be beyond the pale and guilty of *shirk*, and thus theoretically subject to the treatment meted out to *mushrikûn*, quietists or otherwise. This idea that Khawârij of all kind were extremists persisted generally (cf. also in IB 1 below), and led eventually to the Ibâḍis themselves rejecting the label.<sup>75</sup>

This story would certainly seem to confirm that Jâbir was open to the proto-Ibâḍis and other quietists at this time and may even have been sympathetic to them. But then so was al-Aḥnaf al-Qays, apparently, and the fact that he is actually listed in late works as being an Ibâḍi might indicate a tendency to incorporate any important figure deemed a sympathizer.

#### Jâbir's correspondence

The above had largely represented my reservations about Jâbir until, when just completing this book, I was shown a draft of the letters as described in the introductory Note on Sources. I am quite convinced, as is Francesca, that this correspondence is genuine, for the most part with people unknown and full of real, practical problems. Unfortunately, time has not permitted so thorough a study as I would have liked, but my cursory examination shows that all the letters follow the same pattern, replies to letters sent by the addressee, who in most cases appears at least to be sympathetic to the *da'wa*. Three recipients are readily recognizable, two letters to 'Abd al-Malik b. al-Muhallab, one to Khayra bt. Ṣufra/ Ḍamra,<sup>76</sup> and one to Sâlim b. Dhakwân. Several of the others are clearly Omani, but one at least is most probably a Khurâsâni (letter 6 in the Muscat edn.). All take the same form, a series of pious invocations followed by an *ammâba'd*, after which the specifics are addressed.

**(p.196)** Although it seems that the actual core subject-matter is not basically very different from that found in the *Âthâr* (issues of correct Muslim practices and ritual, marriage, divorce, slaves, concubines, etc.<sup>77</sup>), there is a considerable amount of interest concerning the specifics of commercial and agricultural practices. Once again there appears to be no reasoning given behind the rulings and Qur'ânic quotations are limited to the missive's introduction. The only sources I spotted were Ibn 'Abbâs (fairly frequently, including one report of his about what 'Umar decided), along with his slave 'Ikrima a couple of times, while there is a hearsay report of what 'Ali pronounced concerning menstruation, and from Hâshim (*sic*) a judgement to the effect that the initial owner had no right to increase the rent or retrospectively claim in the sale price of a piece of land if it was subsequently improved (by irrigation). But the whole context gives life to the problems. Take, for an example, letter 15 to Mâlik, an Omani whom Jâbir clearly knows well. After the introductory pious exhortations he asks the recipient to buy him a good Omani female riding camel (*nâqa*), as he is getting old and needs a comfortable ride. He then takes up issues that Mâlik has raised, amongst them how to treat his dispersed agricultural holdings, some of which he seems to own and others to which he acts as agent, and how to treat them for assessing *zakât*. In this he insists that when he travels around the villages he prays the two *rak'as* properly, and that if it is Ramadan he observes the rules concerning fasting, and so on. He then takes up some other problems. That Mâlik wants to buy camels by bartering sheep; Jâbir says he sees no harm in that (*fa lâ arâ bi dhalik bâs<sup>an</sup>*), the standard formula we have observed he so often uses. But there are two unusual issues. The first is that Mâlik has been refused permission to go on the Hajj. Jâbir replies that since he has already done so, combining the *hajj*, *'umra*, and *wuqûf*, he should not let this worry him. The second is that he flogged someone who died as a result. He offered his sons *dîya* (blood wite) of forty sheep (?), but they disapproved (*karah*), considering it too much, and told him to give the surplus as alms. Jâbir's reply seems to say that you should give them the *dîya* but may reduce it as they wish, but only if you are sure that they are not refusing the full amount out of fear of you and possible future sanctions.

From this it seems clear that Mâlik is a powerful person, responsible probably for some district in the interior which he is trying to administer **(p.197)** according to true Islamic principles, including inflicting *ḥadd* punishments, but the fact that he has been refused permission to go on the Hajj shows that Oman was under some outside power. Since Jâbir says that he himself is old, this refers almost certainly to the period after Hajjaj occupied Oman (see Chapter 4).

But while the actual material is relatively innocuous and politically unobjectionable, there are hints that what has been preserved is precisely what deals with such anodyne subjects: Several times Jâbir says to erase what he has written or that he himself has destroyed his correspondent's letter. So Ṭurayf b. Khâlid, to whom there are two letters (nos. 3 and 14), is told to destroy his letter (§186), while in his letter to al-Ḥârith b. 'Amr (no. 5),<sup>78</sup> he says he does not like his name being bruited around (§72). His letter to Sâlim b. Dhakwân, whom he obviously admires and encourages, clearly shows that they mutually destroyed their correspondence, with the result that all that survives from what should have been a fascinating exchange are discussions of such matters as a man having sexual relations with a concubine. The letters to 'Abd al-Malik b. al-Muhallab are also obviously of interest, and cover a wide range of issues, including the specifics of *zakât*: Jâbir tells him that the obligation only concerns specie,

---

livestock, and agriculture, but jewels and pearls and jewellery in general are not liable, unless for trade. He also states that Muslims may not enter into partnership with the *dehqans* (the non-Muslim headmen responsible for the villages). But once again there is a hint of deeper complicity in §213, where he says when necessary write to me in secrecy and confidence, for you have learnt what we are about. 'Abd al-Malik, Yazîd's brother who died with him, it should be noted, held considerable positions of authority before Hajjaj turned against the family, and was at one time responsible for the *shurṭa* in Iraq.<sup>79</sup>

That 'what we are about' features again in the reply (no. 7) to Nâfi' b. 'Abdullâh, in which Nâfi' has been extolling the *ḥaqq* which 'we and you are expounding (vb. *bayyana*)'. But the most extraordinarily open expression of what that might be occurs in the two letter (nos. 12 and 13) to Nu'mân b. Salama, who has set up some sort of Khâriji state (*makhraj*) somewhere in Arabia,<sup>80</sup> most probably in Oman, and who has been complaining of the problems of doing in this world what is compatible with what is required for the next. Jâbir replies, in the hope that his letter reaches him, that you should sell your present world and buy the next through the path (*madhhab*) of your *dîn*. He then goes on to deal with **(p.198)** some of Nu'miân's specific problems, notably that the *dehqans* are getting most of the revenue and 'your *bayt al-mâl*' little. So assemble the people of your land and determine what the people can afford, and that will suffice, he advises him. And tell them that there are no *dehqans* without you and if necessary that you will provide them with a document (*ṣakk*): thus you will be able to see that the right amount gets to the *bayt al-mâl*. He then goes on with what the correct *jizya* is, and replies to the question whether the Muslims are allowed to treat the ripe dates, grain, and fruit as a *kharâj*. Certainly not, they have no rights over anything except what is prescribed *farîḍa*, even if there is a significant surplus. As for the Muslims of your land, you may not join the *ṣadaqa* to the *jizya* for it is the property of the Muslims who pay it.

Here, then, we have Jâbir directly advising a 'Khâriji' of some sort about the proper course of running his territory. And there seems to be another case, in the letter to Yazîd b. Yasâr (no. 8), where Jâbir acknowledges the information that *walâk Allâh min ahl 'Umân* and that he was trying to establish just rule. In this he again talks of the *bayt al-mâl* and says he may not make loans from it or try and increase it by lending cash, since that would be usury. In other words, even if he had not directly incited Nu'mân and Yazîd to 'rebel', he certainly condoned their having done so. This indicates, too, that some sort of proto-Ibâdi communities had existed, at least ephemerally, in Oman at some time or other, and I am inclined to place the period as that of Ibn Zubayr and his brother Muṣ'ab, when eastern Arabia was more or less independent. But it may also be after the defeat of the Ṣufri revolts in Iraq, when some of the zealots converted to Ibâdism and tried to activate the movement, eventually to join Ibn al-Ash'ath's great revolt (see below). It was perhaps at this time also that Jâbir gained some influence over the Muhallabid family and incited them to use their power wisely, and rule justly over their vast domains in Iran. This concern is also apparent when he talks about *zakât* in his letter (no. 6) to 'Anîfa/'Unayfa, who clearly has responsibility in the campaigns on the Khurâsân front and whom he also ticks off for asking him a question to which the answer is obvious.<sup>81</sup> But this situation in Khurâsân must have changed once Hajjaj became governor in the East and his feud with the Muhallabids developed, and in the end he clamped down on Oman itself, as Jâbir's letter to Mâlik confirms.

**(p.199)** Conclusion: *kitmân*?

So where does that leave us? My own conclusion is that Jâbir (and in this he was followed by Abû 'Ubayda) did not like *fitan* (rebellions). That is not quite the same thing as saying Jâbir approved of the *qa'ada*. Jâbir was not some Imam in *kitmân* secretly organizing a *da'wa*. His concern was to establish that *madhhab al-dîn* of which he wrote to Nu'mân. His aim was to ensure that the rules and nature of that true *dîn* were understood by all, and that through its propagation amongst those he knew and trusted some would strive to establish a just administration. His influence, however, was largely confined to the Basran network and was particularly strong amongst the Omanis, who under the Muhallabids had considerable authority. Perhaps before the advent of Hajjaj he was a little more politically active, and was prepared secretly to advise those who had sold this world for the next. So he was willing to intervene on behalf of the Ibâḍis in their quarrel with Ziyâd al-A'sam, but I do not believe he actually incited rebellion or *khurûj*. I suspect that after Hajjaj established power he increasingly withdrew from anything that would make either himself undesirably conspicuous or the proto-Ibâḍis suspect, condoning the assassination of Hajjaj's spy Khardallâh. That, it should be noted, was not the same thing as the secret political assassination which Sâlim b. Dhakwân condemns,<sup>82</sup> and which is attributed to the Tha'labiyya, according to the letter of the *fuqahâ'* to the Imam al-Salt. From now on Jâbir confined himself to teaching the nature of the true religion, concentrating on the nature of the *farâ'id*, for example on what Islam taught about *zakât* and *jizya*, rather than saying anything about the existing tax regime that might be construed as critical of government. His message was universal and most of his pupils were non-Ibâḍis. Even so, he was perhaps still prepared to open up to a selected few like Ẓumâm and budding activists of the next generation he really trusted, like Sâlim b. Dhakwân. These were the figures in whose time Ibâḍism began to emerge as a real *da'wa*.

So to this extent Jâbir may be considered as the founding father of Ibâḍism, the person who taught and guided some figures who became central to the emergence of the Ibâḍi movement. The study of his correspondence also reveal a hitherto unknown fact, that during the disturbed years of the second *fitna* and its aftermath, what might be recognized as independent proto-Ibâḍi communities did come into existence, at least temporarily in parts of Oman; but these were ephemeral, quashed by Hajjaj's occupation, and when we next find Ibâḍi activists it is in the army of Yazîd b. al-Muhallab. But above all, it was that *madhhab al-dîn* for which Jâbir was remembered.

**(p.200)** The *K. Abi Sufyân* makes clear to the Maghribis that the Ibâḍi '*ulamâ'* in Basra had the greatest respect, indeed reverence, for Jâbir's *fiqh* and teaching. So he recounts how Abû 'Ubayda's reaction to an issue he was uncertain about was to tell the *shaykhs* of Basra to see if they could find out if Jâbir had said anything relevant. Similarly, for Abû'l-Ḥurr, the leader of the delegation to 'Urnar II who died at Yawm Makka, Jâbir was the be all and end all. His answer to problems was always along the lines: I asked Jâbir, Jâbir was asked, I heard Jâbir, Jâbir said, the *riwâya* of Jâbir! In other words, Jâbir's scholarship was impeccable and he became the central point of reference for *fiqh*. That *fiqh* was almost pure *ra'y* and absorbed into the *âthâr* of the Ibâḍi community, with the result that it was only much later that his founding role began to emerge. And it did so in North Africa. As we shall see, the Maghrib became the repository of much early Basran material, precisely because it was recorded for them by the Mashriqis, who

---



only started rediscovering their own origins when a positive effort was made to recuperate what the forefathers had said, in the time of Ibn Baraka. Thus the *K. Abi Sufyân*, the *Âthâr* of al-Rabî', the correspondence of Jâbir have only survived there, and some of this material is only now resurfacing through the positive attempts of present-day Ibâḍis scholars to locate and publish it. Even so, a lot of early material in the Jabal Nafûsa, where much was held, has been destroyed by Kaddafhi's persecution of the Ibâḍis.

Jâbir's correspondence, which I date as covering roughly the years 70-90, is thus of the greatest importance. It not only helps elucidate the Ibâḍi claim that he was their founding father, but it throws quite a lot of light on an obscure period of Omani history and the conditions that were prevailing there. Some elements will be discussed elsewhere in this book. But above all, when combined with other of his surviving material, it provides an extremely early source for studying the wider aspects of *fiqh* evolution. Jâbir was essentially a *faqîh* and his opinions are therefore characteristic of a main line of *fiqh* development in a very early period. His correspondence confirms that he did know Ibn 'Abbâs, but on the other hand he, along with his slave Ikrima, is really the only source he quotes (so far as my preliminary survey shows). Furthermore, Jâbir deferred to Ibn 'Abbâs's opinion, for Francesca cites a letter in which he says he would have opined otherwise, but the legal opinion of those before us is preferable to our own (*wa ra'y man qablnâ afdalmin ra'yinâ*). In this he was laying the basis for a fundamental Ibâḍi principle, that of accepting the rulings of the worthy predecessors, the *âthâr*. On the other hand, there is absolutely no trace of a *ḥadîth* tradition, and in so far as *Sunna* is invoked it stems entirely from the odd reference to what might be considered the collective memory of the community. What is more, unlike the tradition of the Muḥakkima, Jâbir does not quote the Qur'ân as a source (p. 201) of his elaborations of the law, confining them to pious injunctions, although clearly the *farâ'id* derive therefrom, and we must assume that his opinions and judgements derive essentially from his having absorbed the Community *sunna* and his ability to apply the principles to specific unresolved issues posed by his students, who are often enquiring in the context of real-life situations.

In some ways Jâbir's relationship with the Ibâḍi *madhhab* may be likened to the remarkable *aflâj* irrigation system of Oman, but which is by no means unique to that country. The *falaj* draws its water deep underground near its source in the most reliable and purest aquifer, bringing it to the surface at the *sharî'a*, that is, the technical term for the place where the village community draws its pure, untainted source of drinking water and from where it goes on to irrigate the lands of the community. For the Ibâḍis Jâbir b. Zayd provides the deep stream into which the mother well of their *madhhab* is sunk. But his was not a *madhhab*, but rather a *madhhab al-dîn* from which others also drew the pure water. To this extent Shammâkhi is justified in describing Jâbir as *aṣl al-madhhab*, so long as it is remembered that the concept of a *madhhab* did not exist in his time, nor for many years after. What Jâbir taught was the universal *madhhab al-dîn*, not a particular school. A *falaj* may also have more than one headwater, and others may be added later, just as Ibâḍism in due course, and notably from the fourth century (Chapter 12), started quoting non-Ibâḍi sources, and in the process largely adopting Shâfi'i criteria, finally to create in the 6/12<sup>th</sup> century a *madhhab* in its own right. It is then that Jâbir re-emerges as the key figure in the Ibâḍi *ḥamalât al-'ilm* by which they trace their learning back to those who knew the Prophet, and from whom an actual *ḥadîth* collection derived in the Maghrib. Absolutely nothing

---

that survives from Jâbir justifies placing him in this role of a transmitter, other than the fact that he clearly knew Ibn 'Abbâs and generally *ex silentio* the 'Community Sunna'. Once more, in the second *nahḍa* of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many of the early sources were refined and reworked as Ibâḍism started to seek common ground with other Muslims in what was, in effect, a general *salafiyya* movement. So, each headwater of the Ibâḍi *falaj* draws from pure sources, adding and enriching the total water supply, which is the life of its dependent community. The gates of *ijtihâd* have never been closed, since that actual concept is not really Ibâḍi. On the other hand, the basic *âthâr* of the school have never been challenged, and the *uṣûl al-fiqh* on which the *madhhab* is based came from the founding fathers, and these included Jâbir b. Zayd.

These conclusions in fact concur with Ennami's own personal assessment, that Jâbir was no more than a religious leader to whom his followers came to learn Islam and to ask questions concerning religious matters. **(p.202)** However, the *fiqh* he taught was that of Islam in its earliest form; it was essentially *ra'y* and in due course had to be rationalized in a form acceptable to the concept of a *madhhab*.

So while bearing in mind that the Ibâḍis of Basra incorporated Jâbir's teachings as a primary source of *fiqh*, more or less from the start, we can see how and why his role has been exaggerated: from being a prominent *faqîh*, in contact with proto-Ibâḍis whom he encouraged by providing them with the true model on which their community should be based, he became an Ibâḍi Imam in *kitmân* and the *tâbi'i* through whom the Ibâḍis can reach Companions and compete with the Sunnis on their own terms. In the process, Abû 'Ubayda's undoubted role as a teacher is manipulated in the Maghrib to provide the link between Jâbir and al-Rabî', whereas in Oman he is either omitted from 'Awtabi's *ḥamal* lists or placed after al-Rabî'. Al-Rabî' is seen as the principal figure, rightly so because it was in his time that the full Imamates came into existence in Tahert and in Oman. But whichever figure is promoted, it is obviously desirable to make Jâbir's death-date as late as possible to avoid too many anachronisms, as well probably as pushing his birth-date in the opposite direction to ensure a good overlap with Companions. A late death-date also has the advantage of showing he was active after the death of Hajjaj. Hence Ibn al-Sallâm's 103/721–2, a decade after the real probable date of Jâbir's death, as declared by Abû 'Ubayda himself,<sup>83</sup> and why it is that our Maghribi author calls Abû 'Ubayda the first figure after Jâbir in the history of Ibâḍism. 'Awtabi, on the other hand, in choosing al-Rabî' is not in the slightest interested in establishing the historicity of the early part of his *ḥamal* list. Historical anachronisms did not worry the Omanis until relatively modern times.

#### Jâbir as author of IB 1?

All the above provides further evidence to underline the reservations Cook made when suggesting that rather than Ibn Ibâḍ's first letter (IB 1) being a letter to the Caliph 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwân, that it was written by Jâbir b. Zayd to al-Muhallab's son 'Abd al-Malik. (Such reservations are irrelevant to IB 2, which could well have been written by the real Ibn Ibâḍ to an unspecified Shf'i).

The ascription of IB 1 to Ibn Ibâḍ probably stems from the fact that the writer is early, apparently an adult in Mu'âwiya's time (d. 60/680). Like Sâlim's *Sîra*, the two supposed Ibn Ibâḍ

letters probably resurfaced quite late, certainly after the Ibn Ibâḍ ‘myth’ had been accepted by the Ibâḍis (**p.203**) themselves, and so his authorship was plausible.<sup>84</sup> Here I would merely add one thing to the already considerable study this missive has received; it is very much in the Muḥakkima style exhibited by Sâlim himself, with no less than fifty direct Qur’ânic quotations. The addressee was probably simply ‘Abd al-Malik, but its redactor made the best sense he could of the period and assumed it was written to the Caliph ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwân, emending the name accordingly, in good faith, but in the process reinforcing the likelihood of the writer being Ibn Ibâḍ. One thing Cook has shown for fact, even if Ibn Ibâḍ were the author of IB 1, he was not writing to the Caliph ‘Abd al-Malik. That of itself weakens the self-reinforcing link with Ibn Ibâḍ. Furthermore, there are seeming anachronisms in his theology (notably in the use of *kâfir*, *a fortiori* if he did use the concept of *kufr al-ni‘ma*). And if he did indeed convert to Mu‘azilism,<sup>85</sup> he can hardly have been writing to ‘Abd al-Malik.

Cook's main reservations against his own suggestion of Jâbir's authorship are that the letter is ‘ferociously outspoken in its politics; it declares an unqualified loyalty to the *khawârij* of the past and quotes God to establish the duty of holy war against the imam of error in the present. At the same time, and in marked contrast with the *Sîrat Sâlim*, the author takes a stand against the concealment of one's religious beliefs ... [This in] contrast with the extant correspondence of Jâbir,<sup>[86]</sup> with its recurrent theme of fear of the authorities and emphasis on the need for secrecy.’ Exactly! What I have shown reinforces that reservation, and furthermore demonstrates that Jâbir's exchanges with ‘Abd al-Malik, Yazîd b. al-Muhallab's brother, were of the most amiable kind.

My own suggestion is that the letter is addressed by one of the more militant early Ibâḍis to ‘Abd al-Malik b. (the future) ‘Umar II. We know that the Ibâḍis had particularly high hopes of the Caliph's son but that he died whilst their delegation was at Damascus and they assisted at his funeral. That death, incidentally, may indicate why ‘Umar did not try to alter Sulaymân b. ‘Abd al-Malik's covenant which, when he unexpectedly fell terminally ill, appointed ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-Aziz as his successor, but stipulated that he should be followed by Yazîd b. ‘Abd al-Malik; there was certainly a fear that ‘Umar might do so and indeed even appoint a non-Umayyad religious scholar as his successor.<sup>87</sup> Abû Qaḥṭân, when dealing with ‘Umar II in his *Sîra*, says that some of the true Muslims suspended (**p.204**) judgement (*waqaf*) from him, while others dissociated (*bara'*) and gave their *walâya* to his son ‘Abd al-Malik. This is further confirmed in Abû Sufyân's account of the *wafd* as given him by Mubâarak, Ḥattât b. Kâtib's son, in which his father told him how they were with ‘Umar when news of ‘Abd al-Malik's death came and how they condoled with him: ‘and ‘Abd al-Malik had already responded to what they had called him (*ajâbahum ... qabla mâ da ‘ûhu ilayh*)’. Another version said that ‘Umar sent for them and told them to prepare the body ‘of your friend (*âlu ṣâhibakum*)’.<sup>88</sup> All of which confirms the close relations between the Ibâḍis and the Caliph's son and makes sense both of the general ‘friendly’ tone of the letter, the call for reform, and the fact that one version of the letter indicates that it is addressed to a branch of the Umayyad house which was critical of Mu‘âwiya and Yazîd I.<sup>89</sup> The letter may well be a hint to encourage the ‘Abd al-‘Azîz side of the family to rebel, since it had been bypassed, even though ‘Abd al-‘Azîz had refused to renounce his rights to succeed: but he had died before his brother ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwân, who did everything to ensure that rule stayed with his own descent. ‘Umar's succession was purely fortuitous and did

indeed raise dissension in the Umayyad clan. That rivalry may, incidentally, also explain how it was that another son of 'Umar II, 'Abdullâh, when governor of Kûfa, came fairly readily to terms with the Khârîjî al-Daḥḥâk b. Qays al-Shaybânî<sup>90</sup> in his war against Marwân II and actually paid him homage (127/745). Clearly the recipient of IB 1 had contacted an 'Ibâdî' Khârîjî to know more about their politics, albeit expressing what was a fairly widely held view that they were all extremists (rather as Ziyâd al-A'sam did). In reply, the writer sets him straight about the early Khawârij (*sic*, not Muḥakkima) with whom he affiliates, the deviation of the Azâriqa, as too on 'Uthmân, 'Ali, and so on, and denies any religious fanaticism (*ghulw fi'l-dîn*).

This initial exchange was most probably well before 'Umar II's succession, and indeed the enquiry may even have come from 'Abd al-Malik on behalf of his father. Furthermore, the resulting contact could well explain why a delegation of the proto- Ibâdis went to see the new Caliph, with whom they seem to have engaged in serious debate. Who the writer was remains a matter of guesswork, but clearly one of the early generation who had lived in Mu'âwiya's time, at least as a young man. One possibility is the warrior Bistâm b. 'Umar b. al-Musîb al-Ḍabbi, known also as **(p.205)** Masqala, a Ṣufri who had supported Shabîb's revolt but after his death in 77 settled in Basra and embraced Ibâdism. He seems to have belonged to a band of early Ibâdî zealots who were trying to obtain a shift from *qu'ûd* to *shirâ'*, some of whom joined Ibn al-Ash'ath's revolt.<sup>91</sup> It was this shift that led Hajjaj to start persecuting the Ibâdis. Other potential candidates might be found amongst the delegation that actually went to see 'Umar II, Sâlim b. Dhakwân himself (?), or even perhaps Ḍumâm.

#### Sâlim b. Dhakwân

Finally, in discussing sources for the period consideration must be given to what might possibly be the earliest extant exposé of the Ibâdî *credo*.

Since I originally wrote about the early Ibâdis, the name of Sâlim b. Dhakwân has blazed across the Ibâdî firmament rather like a comet, leaving in his trail an immense amount of scholastic research and argument. For astronomers, the current huge investment in comet research largely lies in what they may tell us about the origins of the universe. For us, the interest in Sâlim is similar, for our present state of knowledge would indicate that Sâlim was neither a galaxy nor a star nor even a planet, but a minor asteroid which only reappeared in the sky with the (re)discovery of his *Sîra*, probably around the 4/10<sup>th</sup> century in Oman. According to Crone and Zimmermann's investigations, the first to mention him there is al-Ḥasan al-Bisyâni, while the first to cite him is Muḥammad b. Ibrâhîm al-Kindi in the *Bayân al-Shar'* (concerning his view on 'Uthmân; likewise Abû Bakr al-Kindi in the *K. al-Ihtidâ*). In fact it seems to have been al-Bisyâni who rediscovered him, for there is a group of early *siyar* which apparently were collected by him, and this includes the *Sîrat Sâlim b. Dhakwân*.<sup>92</sup> Sâlim's name is mentioned by Shammâkhi, but his *Sîra* apparently only reached the Maghrib in the twentieth century! Fairly late Omani tradition has it that he was an Omani.<sup>93</sup> The fact that Sâlim only reappeared at a relatively late date, however, should not be allowed to influence the argument, since, as will be shown in Chapter 12, the period of his rediscovery was one when a positive effort was being made to record as much as possible of the early Ibâdî sources.

His import thus apparently lies almost entirely in the content of his *Sîra* and is essentially of interest only if it really is old. It is not intended to enter here into further great detail about dating. Basically, on the **(p.206)** grounds that Sâlim talks of events up to 70 or 72 but makes no mention of the events post-76 in his discussion of the Najdiyya and Azâriqa 'today', that is, no discussion of the so-called Şufriyya revolts of the Shaybânîs, Cook goes ahead on the assumption that he was writing in the early 70s and suggests he was a Kûfan. Madelung proposes c. 700 AD, that is, the start of the 80s. Crone and Zimmermann reject this, saying that Ibâḍism hardly existed at that time and played no role in resistance in Oman until Abû 'Ubayda started to send missionaries there. So they spurn these early dates and go for a complex argument, so complex that they perhaps miss the wood for the trees. They conclude that the author of the Khârîjî section was the author of the whole *Sîra* and place him as post-133/750 (mainly on the grounds of the way he uses the term *Khawârij*, that *hijra* was closed, and his assumption that the Ibâḍis were involved in small-scale revolt), but before roughly 185/800 (on grounds of style). Since he was writing at a time when there was no Imamate and only 'kings', he was either writing pre-129/746 (Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq) or post-134/752 (al-Julandâ b. Mas'ûd). Their main argument for rejecting the first is that Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq had *muhâjirîn* with him whilst Sâlim considered *hijra* as closed. They are inclined to place him in Iran, as van Ess suggested (where—coincidentally?—the Seistanis knew about a very early figure called Sâlim b. Dhakwân), but consider that, whether Omani or Iranian, his work was written between 750 and 800. (Living in Seistan, I would comment, in no ways precludes him from being an Omani in origin, any more than if he had lived in Khurâsân.) The Murji'ite section of his work, on the other hand, was before c. 100/720. They conclude that the *Sîra* is in fact the work that Ibn Nadîm records as a refutation of the Azâriqa, Najadât, and Murji'a but which he wrongly ascribes to Ḍîrar b. 'Amr (c. 110-200/728-815).

Several observations may be briefly made concerning this debate. First: that there is no discussion of the Şufri. As we have seen, when the designation Şufri really does appear historically it is more or less contemporaneously with the Ibâḍis and the difference between them had little to do with doctrine and a great deal to do with tribal hatred. So the fact that Sâlim does not talk about them is scarcely surprising. What concerned him much more were the Najdiyya, because they were politically active in the region. If this argument is correct, it largely invalidates Cook's reason for placing him as pre-76, but not that he might be early. Second, the Khawârij-cum-Ibâḍî experience was indeed one of small revolts, including what Crone and Zimmermann call the great Arabian revolt which was carried out by a small band of fervent warriors, just as Abû Bilâl's and the early Khawârij revolts had been. Third, it is incredible that if Sâlim were writing post-Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq and al-Julandâ that he should make absolutely no reference to their Imamates which totally **(p.207)** transformed the Ibâḍî scene. Fourth, the fascination that so many have shown with what Sâlim says about the Murji'a has made us forget to ask why Sâlim was so virulently opposed to them. The answer essentially lies not so much in their attitude to the first *fitna*, but rather because their approach challenged the whole basic cement of the Ibâḍî community, that of the transmitted *walâya*.

As Cook has rightly pointed out, all our arguments tend to be circular because we have no 'archaeologically' dated document on which to base ourselves. The use of stylistic or even specialized terminology is therefore an insufficient primary argument for dating. Furthermore,

---

from what has been said in the previous chapter, it is quite likely that there may have been parallel rather than linear developments, as for example the use of *kufr al-ni'ma* alongside the primitive, all-embracing *nifâq*, and we simply do not have the sources to be sure. But if *nifâq* is the earlier form, albeit used for long by the conservative early Omani 'ulamâ', it is another indication that Sâlim was 'primitive'. But much more convincing is that the Qur'ân (as in IB 1 also) is virtually the whole basis for his arguments, the *Kitâb Allâh* of the Muḥakkima, the simple, straightforward approach symbolized by those practicing *shirâ'*, as the first real Ibâḍi revolt exemplified. Hence Sâlim's huge introductory section saying effectively (notably §§5–6): 'Those who follow the Qur'ân are dispensed by God from everything else. Base your stance on the firm ground of the Qur'ân.' Somewhat inconsistently he admits when speaking of 'Umar (§38) that he was faced with problems that were not covered by the Book of God, the Sunna of his Prophet (Abû Bakr likewise). Since he was rightly guided, however, his decisions were fine. But he offers no further advice on how he proceeded and on what basis future generations should operate when these basic criteria were insufficient. The reason is obvious: 'Umar's judgements were essentially his own *ra'y*. So Sâlim passes on to Uthmân and his innovations. There is just one moment in §138 in which he hints at what he considers the right process; there he recognizes as valid not just the *Sunna* of his Prophet, but also the *Sunna* of the righteous amongst God's servants (*al-ṣâliḥîn min 'Ibâḍ Allâh*). But he makes absolutely no mention of who those *al-ṣâliḥîn* guides might be. No Ibn Wahb, no Abû Bilâl, no Jâbir b. Zayd, and certainly no proto-Ibâḍis. What Sâlim outlines as being 'our stance' is simply a statement of facts, more a summarized profession of political faith, essentially based on arguments he has already presented, but with no indication of the process by which this common stance was reached. In that he complements Jâbir and al-Rabî' in their presentation of *fiqh*.

Most important, however, as all commentators have noted, is that he is pushing for activation. He totally condemns those who say it is a *fitna* to go out against the unjust Imam (see his sections on the Fatana) and he (p.208) also states that *qu'ûd* is procrastination (§13). He then describes what those who decide to embark on *jihâd* should be. It is interesting that he talks in terms of *jihâd* and not the *shirâ'* the early Ibâḍis tended to use; perhaps another Sâlim idiosyncrasy, perhaps indicative of a variant terminology more consistent with the Qur'ân, perhaps even the original terminology in the proto-Ibâḍi period (cf. also IB 1). So, a group (*nafar*) of Muslims should only give allegiance to their Imam, who should be from the most *afâḍil* and the most *fuqahâ'* of them (§128), since *jihâd fi sabîl Allâh* was *ṭa'at fi'l-ma'rûf* and persisted until they prevailed or perished. Such *mâḍiyûnâ* recognize 'our *qâ'idûn*' but the latter acknowledge that the former are on a more favourable way (§§65, 129). Although God permits *taqiyya* for those living amongst the people of error, once an open call to reform has been issued (the preliminary obligation before any *jihâd*, §122) then no dissimulation is allowed over what is being proclaimed (§141).

All of which indicates that Sâlim was writing at a time before the Ibâḍis had first 'gone out'. If it were after Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq and al-Julandâ then surely they would have served as exemplars, as with all later Ibâḍi authors. The fact that Sâlim closed *hijra* but Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq had *muhâjirîn* with him is surely not a deciding factor for dating him and indeed leads one to query the basis, or with what meaning, Shammâkhi used the term *muhâjirîn* in connection with a group that joined

Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq. The issue of *hijra* was very much a dead dodo by his time and he could simply mean that the insurgents were joined by a group who left their homeland, that is, those coming from Basra and Oman to go up to the Holy Cities.

But there are several other hints for dating Sâlim as pre-Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq. First there are the things that he does not talk about. One, already noted, is that he gives no authorities (other than the Qur'ân) for 'our stance': this may be indicative of an early stage in developing a collective view, or it could be that he is simply following standard practice. Similarly, the fact that he makes no mention of *qadar*, which developed an important debate in the proto-Ibâdi community (see Chapter 7), may be because it had not yet seriously raised its head, or because it was unresolved. Likewise *wuqûf*, another debatable issue, although violently condemning the parallel notion of *irjâ'*. Nor does the Creation of the Qur'ân issue arise. It is of course perfectly reasonable to say, as Crone and Zimmermann do, that it is not an '*aqîda*', and that he is not dealing with theological and eschatological issues, but certain aspects of these debates were as political as the four groups that do concern him, the Murji'a, Azâriqa, Najdiyya, and Fatana.

We too may remain in a state of *wuqûf* if these issues are taken in isolation, but not when the existing biographical clues are also reconsidered. Perhaps the most significant is Jâbir b. Zayd's letter to Sâlim, which, now (p.209) that I have seen it, leaves me in no doubt that it is our Sâlim that he is addressing in approving terms. That of itself shows that Sâlim was of sufficient importance to be exchanging direct correspondence with Jâbir before he died in 93. Then there is the fact that Shammâkhi places him in the generation of Abû 'Ubayda. Of itself this carries no great weight, but it is confirmed in a detailed chronological list of those accorded *walâya* in Book III of 'Awtabi's *K. al-Ḍiyâ'*, where Sâlim b. Dhakwân is placed between Abû'l-Ḥurr b. al-Ḥuṣayn (who led the Ibâdi delegation to 'Umar II and was killed 'Yawm M ekka') and Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq and his group; which is exactly where I would expect to find him if my reasoning has validity. It is to be noted that this list of 'Awtabi is much fuller and better organized chronologically than that of al-Bisyâni quoted by Crone and Zimmermann.<sup>94</sup> Yet even with the earlier author, his placement in the order Jâbir, Abû 'Ubayda, Ḍumâm, Sâlim b. Dhakwân, Abû'l-Ḥurr, coupled to the fact that it is in the context of a discussion of the early authorities from Ibn Ibâd down to Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq, confirms Sâlim as belonging to the period of early activation. That in turn means reconsidering the reports that Sâlim was a Hilâlî and that there was a Sâlim al-Hilâlî in the Maghribi list of the delegation to 'Umar II, which Crone and Zimmermann try to downplay, as too the reference in the *Ta'rikh-i Sistân* to a homonym who was captured by the Arabs at Bust and later rose to pre-eminence among them,

My belief, therefore, is that Sâlim was indeed an early figure and prominent before 93 in Seistan, who played a role in activating the movement, and was possibly a member of the delegation to 'Umar II. That conforms more or less to Madelung's suggested date for his *Sîra*. He thus represents one of those people who were squeezed out or have been forgotten in the rationalization of Ibâdi origins, partly perhaps because his *Sîra* early on disappeared from view. Furthermore, if this dating for a *floruit* is correct, his *Sîra* does indeed throw light on the original formulation of the Ibâdi political *credo* at an early stage in the movement's activation, and should be compared with another early extant work from perhaps a little later, the *Sîra* of Shabîb b. 'Aṭiyya. Sâlim's is a clear statement of what the proto-Ibâdis believed and how they

should behave when declaring a *khurûj*. His emphasis on Qur'ânic quotation shows he is still very much in the true Muḥakkima tradition, while his omission of all other sources confirms that the school was largely unstructured and its views essentially consensual, with no figure dominant. His choice of the four groups he rebuts indicates that these were the most serious threat, ideologically and politically, to the emergence of the Ibâḍi movement and its immediate potential target of southern Arabia and parts of Iran. It shows that the **(p.210)** call to *shirâ'*/*jihâd* remained essentially the same as that of the early Muḥakkima and Abû Bilâl: the same 'simple' but unexceptionable message of *Kitâb Allâh* and an associated, but vague, *Sunnat al-Nabî* that Abû Ḥamza Mukhtâr b. 'Awf preached when the small band, which included Abû'l-Ḥurr, responded to the call to arms and took the Holy Cities.

That spectacular, but short-lived, success changed the whole face of Ibâḍism.

Notes:

(1) Crupi La Rosa 1953.

(2) van Ess 1991-7: v. 121-4.

(3) For details of these various authors and their works, see their entries in Custers 2006: vol. iii.

(4) Bûlrawâḥ, Ibrâhîm b. 'Ali (in press).

(5) Darjîni, ii. 290, 478; Barrâdi, item 9.

(6) Cf. Cook 1981: 142.

(7) Francesca 2003: 271, basing herself on two modern authors, has argued that the sources infer that these *majâlis* developed three forms, those open to all members to discuss doctrinal and legal problems, a second inner circle for those concerned with organizing the *da'wa*, and a third intended for training the *du'ât* (propagandists).

(8) Ibn Sallâm, 110.

(9) pp. 88 and 114.

(10) Cf. al-Rabî's report: 'A. 'Ubayda states that ... Anas [b. Mâlik] and Jâbir b. Zayd died in the same week, that is in the year 93', in Abû Ya'qûb al-Warjîlânî's *Tartib* (see al-Sâlimi edn. 1968: ii. 193 of *al-Jâmi' al-Ṣaḥîḥ*).

(11) p. 88.

(12) cf. MS 2434 and Ibn Maddâd (1981 edn.), 18-19.

(13) K. *al-Muḥâraba* § 34.

(14) QS (*loc cit*) and KD 42.



(15) QS viii. 312 and Ibn Maddâd MS, 129. Cf also C&Z 303.

(16) The text seems to make out that Abû Nûḥ was a separate person from Şâlih (confirmed by use of the plural, not dual). This is curious, because other sources are clear that Abû Nûḥ was Şâlih's *kunya*. The father's name for Ḥâjib, if it is indeed Ḥâjib al-Ṭâ'iy is also unique(?). I suggest that if another figure is to be looked for it might have been the rather mysterious al-Ḥayyân b. al-A'raj who appears in Shammâkhi as a contemporary of Jâbir, older than Abû 'Ubayda and from whom he and Abû Nûḥ transmitted the master's words.

(17) QS viii. ch. 38.

(18) Abû Sa'îd's version is even stronger: 'May God dissociate from you.'

(19) KD 526 and MS 2434 There were two B. Nadabs, both Azd (see Chapter 1).

(20) x. ch. 11.

(21) *Kashf*-Sachau 1898: 14 is clearer to read than KD 526, QS viii. 301-3.

(22) *Kashf* and QS (viii. 302) seem to imply that Abû Mawdûd Ḥabîb b. Ḥafṣ b. Ḥâjib was one of their number: QS goes on to say that (the grandfather-) Ḥâjib's *kunya* was Abû Mawdûd and he was a *mawlâ* of the B. Hilâl. Clearly there has been confusion. Abû Mawdûd Ḥabîb b. Ḥafṣ was a contemporary of Imam Ghassân b. 'Abdullâh (cf. *Bayân al-Shar'*, Books III and LXVIII for his letter), while the great Abû Mawdûd Ḥâjib is Ḥâjib al-Ṭâ'iy. Something, somewhere has got very muddled. I suspect that Abû Mawdûd Ḥabîb was a grandson of Ḥâjib al-Ṭâ'iy who lived in Oman early on in the First Imamate, but his name has got transferred by copyists to the Damascus delegation in which there was indeed a Hilâlî (perhaps even Sâlim b. Dhakwân) and there is some confirmation of this in the marginalia in the Salimi MS of Ibn Maddâd's *Sira*.

(23) The Maghribi Khabbâb b. Kulayb could well be a misreading of al-Ḥattât b. Kâtib.

(24) For this composite of his biography see Shammâkhi, 101-2, QS viii. 301, KD 526, al-Sâlimi, *Lum'a*, 70.

(25) This story derives from Ibn Baraka < his teacher Abû Mâlik < Abû Muḥammad 'bdullâh (Abû 'bdullâh's son, who rarely features in the records) < Abû Mu'âwiya 'Azzân b. al-Ṣaqr: see *K. al Taqyid*, 102-3.

(26) *K. Abi Sufyân*, in Shammâkhi, 84.

(27) Cf. *inter alia* Cook 1981: 63 for references.

(28) The *K. al-Muḥârabâ*, §34 reports that they were with Ḥabîb b. al-Muhallab, whence presumably the report in the *Muṣannaf*, Book X (in the context of participating in non-Ibâḍi campaigns) that Ja'far b. al-Sammân and Ḥabbâb (read Ḥattât) b. Kâtib were killed in the battle alongside Ḥabîb b. al-Muhallab, i.e. against the Azâriqa (64 AH) at the siege of Basra (whence al-Ḥârithi 1974: 140). That makes no sense of the fact they were in the delegation to 'Umar II,

and is obviously an error, as revealed by Abû 'l-Ḥawâri (*Jâmi'*, MNHC edn. i. 101): 'we have heard that al-Hattât and Ja'far b. al-Sammân took part in an expedition with Yazîd b. al-Muhallab' (cf. also in *Pseudo-K. al-Muḥâraba*).

(29) 1971 and in *EI2*.

(30) Crupi La Rosa 1943, based on Shammâkhi; *KD* 403-4.

(31) Cf. Abû Ḥamza's sermon at Madina (Ṭabari, ii. 2008).

(32) Al-Salmi, Thesis, nos. xxiii and xx (*non vidi*). The letter to Abû'l-Ḥurr indicates he had quit Basra (temporarily, probably for Oman) from fear of arrest.

(33) See *Tuḥfa*, i. 102-3 for details.

(34) Al-Salmi, Thesis, nos. xviii, xxvi, and xxvii.

(35) Cf. Hinds Xerox (C&Z, 4-5), items 8, 23, and 24, one of which is joint with Abû 'Ubayda.

(36) Darjîni, *Ṭallây* edn. ii. 278.

(37) Ibn Maddâd, 1981 edn., 18.

(38) Abû Zakariyya', trans. Le Tourneau 1960: 111.

(39) Shammâkhi, 93-4.

(40) It is hard to reconcile that with his having an aunt or some such female relative who was a Muhallabid (Shammâkhi, 84). While I completely discount that Abû 'Ubayda goes back to Abû Bilâl and 'Urwa's time, it is conceivable he had a maternal relationship to Abû Ṣufra, who himself was originally a basket-maker, according to his enemies.

(41) Al-Salmi, Thesis, 214.

(42) The Maghribi sources sometimes give him a Kindi *nisba*, but both Ṭabari and Omani sources make him Salîmi Azd. For Abû Ḥamza see in particular Mubarrad, *Nasab*, 23; Ibn Durayd, 498; 'Awtabi, A277v, 268v-269r.

(43) Cf. Lewicki 1935.

(44) *KD* 31 says Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq (who made his *khurûj* in 90!) needed help before doing so, and asked advice of Abû 'Ubayda and others in Basra. They sent him Abû Ḥamza and 12 men amongst whom was Balj (20 years old) who followed up with 2,000 cavalry and defeated the Hadrami 'âmil.

(45) The following account is a synthesis of the classical and Ibâḍi sources, which in fact are not that divergent. All the Ibâḍi sources have accounts, Darjîni, Shammâkhi, as too the Omanis (*Kashf*, ch. 31 uses material from both Maghribi and Omani sources). As well as Ṭabari, ii. 1942-3, 1981-3, 2006-15 (cf. also Mas'udi, *Murûj*, vii. 66-7 and Ibn al-Athîr, v. 297-301), Ibn

Miskawayh, *K. al-'Uyûn*, i. 167-79 is most interesting for the collapse of the revolt. See also Daghfous 1995: vol. ii for further details of certain events based on non-Ibâḍi sources.

(46) In Ibâḍi sources Abraha b. Ṣabâḥ al-Ḥaḍrami, sometimes just called al-Ḥaḍrami (cf. Ibn Waṣṣâf, 108r). It is worth noting that around this same period there were two Ḥimyar revolts in their own territory against the Umayyad authority, seemingly nothing to do with the Ibâḍis (Mad'aj 1988: 166-7).

(47) I use the terminology of Cook's great (2000) study of the subject.

(48) Ibn Durayd, 468, 'Awtabi, A208v.

(49) Ṭabari, ii. 2009-11 (translation is from the English edn.). This is much more interesting than the other sermon (see Crone and Hinds 1986, app. 3), almost entirely devoted to invective against the wrongdoing Caliphs.

(50) I use the Omani reading rather than the Ḥasan of Shammâkhi, 92 and Darjîni, 251-2.

(51) Abû 'Abdullâh in Ibn Maddâd MS 280r.

(52) For a comparison of 'Abdullâh b. Sa'îd and Muḥammad b. Abi 'Affân's status as 'temporary' Imams, see *Tuḥfa*, i. 112.

(53) Chelhod 1984: 29-30; al-Mad'aj 1988: 183-5, Daghfous 1995: ii. 776 ff.

(54) All Ibâḍi sources have something to say about Jâbir, and much written, more or less accepting the Ibâḍi interpretation; a useful summary appears in C&Z 301-3. For Jâbir's *fiqh*, see Bakkûsh 1986.

(55) *Murûj*, vi. 137-56. Incidentally, Mas'ûdi is alone in saying Jâbir was an Azdi *mawlâ*, a most unlikely origin in view of the status he achieved in tribal-conscious Basra.

(56) MNHC MS 2424 categorically denies it, but Ibn Maddâd's *Sîra* (MS 270r but not in printed 1981 edn.) is more nuanced: asked if it were true, Abû 'Abdullâh replied that to the best of his knowledge he was from Firq and a Yaḥmadi, but God knows best.

(57) Cf. Juynboll 1983: 206 and also in 1998.

(58) See his biography in *EI2* (Crone).

(59) There is a nice little story that Yazîd sent a *ghulâm* he wanted to manumit to study with Jâbir, who refused payment for doing so (*K. Manthûrat al-Ashyâkh*, vol. ii).

(60) A point emphasized by Abû Ishâq Ibrâhîm Aṭfayyish in his *Nabdhafî ta'rîkh al-khawârij*, in al-Sâlimi, Muḥammad, and 'Assâf 1963.

(61) *K. Abi Sufyân* in Shammâkhi, 67 and 72.

(62) Shammâkhi, 76 and 81.

---

(63) It is worth remembering that Hajjaj's secretary, Yazîd b. Abi Muslim, who was Jâbir's friend, kept his job when Hajjaj died. I think it most unlikely that Jâbir ever was under serious threat from Hajjaj.

(64) 1981: 73–5. The quote comes from Dhahabi, *Ta'rîkh*, iii. 359.11 which van Ess drew attention to in his study of the *K. al-Irjâ'* with which Cook takes issue.

(65) 2003: 70.

(66) Lecker 1995*b*, 645.

(67) q.v. in *EI2* where he is shown as an important historical source for various standard authors, notably Mas'ûdi, and that Jâhîz describes him as a Khâriji. Lecker (1995*a*) points out he was a contemporary of Abû 'Ubayda Ma'mar, who was possibly a Şufri or Ibâḍi, and also that he was a *dâ'i* (one who claimed someone as his father who was not), which may explain why he is simply referred to as Haytham: cf. also Péllat 1970, and Cook 1981: 8. Kharusi (2003) simply plumps for the Basran al-Haytham b. 'Abd al-Ghaffâr [al-Ṭâ'iy] because he transmitted from Ḍumâm and al-Rabî' (see his fn. 83 for sources), albeit stating that all authorities of the *'ilm al-rijâl* have a poor opinion of him and call him a liar. Francesca 2005, 244 now also seems to support his candidacy, albeit in 1998, 47n. 29, she favoured the Khâriji al-Haytham b. al-Haytham al-Nâji.

(68) Details in Ennami 1971 and Francesca 2005.

(69) Francesca 2003, 264–5.

(70) D.Phil., Oxford (2003).

(71) For details about his death-date see C&Z 306–7.

(72) Juynboll 1983: 49 ff.

(73) All that are attributed to him are (no. 18) that he had heard Suwayd say that he heard 'Ali declare in a *khuṭba* that 'Uthmân was killed by the hand of God while I was with him', which as Kharusi states is certainly an Ibâḍi point of view, but only a report. Traditions nos. 248, 286, are nothing to do with Jâbir, 290 only marginally, while 303 coupled to the quotation Kharusi gives from the *Bayan al-Shar'* (significantly from Abû Şufra) merely shows that Jâbir was away from Basra when the oath was given to 'Ubaydallâh b. Ziyâd and thereby escaped making it (in any case, all this is before even Ibâḍism was supposed to have started in 64). No. 296 merely shows that Jâbir was not prepared to get involved with Ibn al-Ash'ath's revolt while 293, which refers to the good terms he was on with Hajjaj's secretary, indicates how far he hid any objections he had to the regime.

(74) There are traces of his doctrine much later in Qalhâti, which C&Z 209 *et passim* discuss.

(75) For discussion see C&Z 276.

(76) Ennami reads Damra, which equates with al-Muhallab b. Abi Şufra's wife Khayra bt. ʿĀmra al-Qushayriyya (cf. van Ess 1976: *Nachträge*, 469), but I think another possible reading is Şufra, which would make her his niece.

(77) In fact of the greatest interest, for Francesca (2003) has found that in such material concerning the sexual promiscuity of female slaves, the sale of free men as slaves, and in the treatment of *ribâ* (usury) are to be found the most traces of archaism and the efforts of the first jurists to find solutions that conform to Islamic tradition. To which I would add that a careful study of the rules of barter and agriculture and trade in general would provide a rich field for future research.

(78) Ennami 1971 identifies him as the Kûfan *tâbi'i* who died during Yazîd b. Mu'âwiya's caliphate when Ziyâd b. Abihi was governor. However, van Ess 1976: 29 has a more probable suggestion of his being the ʿĀ'iy who became one of 'Umar II's governors.

(79) van Ess 1976: 28.

(80) It is a date-palm growing area and has *dehqans*, i.e. was once occupied by the Persians.

(81) Concerning a married woman of Khurâsân leaving the country for the area where the Muslims were fighting, remarrying, and then returning home to find her first husband dead: so could a Muslim now marry her?

(82) §118 and relevant commentary on p. 178.

(83) It is worth noting that the great North African scholar Sulaymân al-Bârûni, in his *Mukhtaşar* (p. 28), simply gives his dates as 18-93.

(84) IB 1 features in the early *sîras* apparently collected by al-Bisyâni and which also includes Sâlim b. Dhakwân's *Sîra*. The addressee is given as 'Abd al-Mâlik b. Marwân in Barrâdi also.

(85) For references see C&Z 202-3.

(86) It should, of course, be remembered that Cook had not seen the correspondence described above, only passing references to it by Ennami.

(87) Cf. Bosworth 1972, notably pp. 76-7.

(88) The first version is in the Sâlimi library MS (267r) of Ibn Maddâd's *Sîra*, the second in that published by MNHC 1981: 8. The account also says that while they were preparing the body 'Umar came in and sat with them. Some of those with him said this is not the place for your *majlis* and to go out to the people so they may exalt you and talk and express their sympathy. So he went out and they continued preparations and it was Mubârak's father who said the prayers.

(89) Cook 1981: 61.

(90) q.v. in *EI* (cf. also art. Şufriyya).

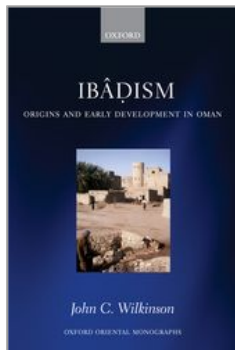
(91) Cf. Lewicki, *EI2*, *al-Ibâdiyya*, 649/2.

(92) Cf. lists of this collection given for libraries in al-‘Awâbi and al-Muḍayrib ais reported by Custers 2006: i. 59.

(93) The *Kashf* and Shaqṣi *Minhaj al-Ṭâlibîn*, see C&Z 198, 12.

(94) C&Z 11, n. 57.

University Press Scholarship Online  
**Oxford Scholarship Online**



## Ibâḍism: Origins and Early Development in Oman

John C. Wilkinson

Print publication date: 2010

Print ISBN-13: 9780199588268

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2011

DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.001.0001

### The Propagation of Ibâḍism from Basra

John C. Wilkinson

DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.003.0007

#### **[–]** Abstract and Keywords

This chapter starts with a failed attempt to set up an Ibâḍi state in Oman at the very start of the 'Abbasid period, and the resulting feud with the Julandâ. It continues with a study of how Ibâḍism was diffused from Basra through the Hajj, merchant and tribal networks, missionary activities, and the written word (important for the Maghrib). It then considers two fundamental concepts, *walâya*, the cement binding the community through association with God; and its opposite *barâ'a*, dissociation. The fundamental dogmas and schisms with which it dissociates are then examined, notably Mu'tazilism, the Qadariyya, Murji'a, and Khawârij (now a pejorative term), and a major internal schism, that of the Shu'aybiyya which had wide ramifications in that of the Nukkarites in North Africa, as also the breakaway of the Yemen community. The chapter concludes with a brief historical survey of Ibâḍism in North Africa and establishing the Rustamid Imamate at Tahert.

*Keywords:* Julandâ b. Mas'ûd, Walâya, barâ'a, Mu'tazilism, Qadariyya, Murji'a, Shu'aybiyya, Nukkarites, Tahert Imamate

#### The first Omani Imam

The Imamate of al-Julandâ b. al-Mas'ûd was more or less a continuation of the preliminary effort to create an Ibâḍi state under Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq during the *fitna* at the end of Umayyad times. An Imamate of sorts survived in Hadramawt for a short while, and so it was the turn of the Omanis to establish Ibâḍi rule at home. This they did by electing in c. 131/748–9<sup>1</sup> al-Julandâ b. al-Mas'ûd, who was reportedly at Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq's *bay'a*. In the process they set off a feud that was to set back their cause for more than forty years, while the continued pursuit of revenge against

the Julandâ and their allies was seriously to tarnish the image of the Imamate, after it was finally established, for a further sixty.

As already shown, after the Persians were evicted the Julandâ had no role outside Oman. They were the old pre-Islamic dynasty who continued to exploit the local non-Arab population, just as their Persian masters had done. So the populace had welcomed the arrival of the Najdiyya, while Khârîji propaganda of various kinds had found fertile ground since the time of Khirrîṭ b. Râshid al-Nâjî and Abû Bilâl through to the Şufrîs. And it seems from Jâbir b. Zayd's letters that the proto-Ibâḍis may also have had some success. The preparation for establishing Ṭâli b al-Ḥaqq's Imamate was certainly in part due to the close contact between Basra and Sohar, and it was from the nearby Arab settlement at Majazz that the bulk of the *shurât* sent to support Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq had been recruited. If indeed Julandâ b. al-Mas'ûd was present at his oath-taking, then it is probable he came with Balj b. 'Uqba's force. Whatever the facts were, the report of his presence in the Yemen provides a neat continuity of authority in the Imamate state.

The Ibâḍis were now also helped by the disordered conditions that saw the 'Abbasids come to power. Al-Saffâḥ (132-6/750-4) himself was ill-disposed both to the Ibâḍis and Basrans in general, but his brother (p.212) Abû Ja'far, the governor of Iraq, was reputedly less so, possibly because two members of his family were married to women who were Ibâḍis or sympathizers.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the Omani accounts state that he appointed Jannâḥ b. 'Ubâda al-Hinâ'i, and then his son Muḥammad, both secret Ibâḍi sympathizers, to Sohar.<sup>3</sup> In fact I suspect Abû Ja'far was unaware of their religious tendencies and chose them because they were of Omani origin, and because he knew them from Khurâsân. The B. Hinâ, it will be remembered, were the most influential Mâlik b. Fahm tribe who had voluntarily ceded authority to the Ma'wali Julandâ clan when the Shanu'a Azd arrived in Oman and, like virtually all the Mâlik b. Fahm Azd, were late-comers to Basra, finding their fortunes with the Muhallabids. It is not until the end of the first century that they come to prominence in Khurâsân and Basra, where they ended up as leaders of the Azd *khums* in succession to the 'Atîk. Abû Ja'far probably believed that by giving them position they would serve his cause, and that is borne out after he became Caliph under the name of Manşûr (136-58/754-75), when he deliberately appointed a Hinâ'i as governor of the Gulf and Yamâma with the precise objective of undermining the old Rabî'a-Azd alliance, in the same way as he did in Yemen by appointing Ma'n b. Zâ'ida al-Shaybâni, who massacred the Ibâḍi-Qaḥṭânîs of Hadramawt before he moved on to deal with 'Khârîji' dissidents in Seistan (see Chapter 1).

So the appointment of Jannâḥ and his son to Sohar, the official capital of Oman and, because of its role in international trade, the only place of real interest for an outside power, was most fortunate, so under their governorship the Ibâḍis flourished there as the 'Abbasids established authority. Sohar was also so closely linked with Tuwâm and northern Oman, itself with close tribal links to the lower Persian coast opposite where the Julandâ b. Karkar (B. Salîma origins) largely held sway. That area in turn gave access to Kirmân, Seistan, and Khurâsân, where Ibâḍi or moderate Muḥakkima doctrines were finding success. So recruits came to Sohar from as far afield as Khurâsân. But while northern Oman was thus drawn into the Ibâḍi nexus, it was also the area that provided the main support for the Julandâ. Although possessing a fort at Sohar (later to be purchased from them using money from the *ṣawâfi* when the Full Imamate was



established<sup>4</sup>), their clan base seems to have been somewhere near Tuwâm, to judge by later events.

So when the Ibâḍis decided to establish an Imamate, they did so by choosing a member of the old ruling family. Al-Julandâ's selection was essentially political, and he represented the prototype *da'if* Imam (like 'Umar II also),<sup>5</sup> according to al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥawâri. But that is an *ex post* (p.213) *facto* rationalization arising from a period when distinction was being made between *shâri* and *difâ'i* Imams and the issue of provisional Imams was coming to the fore (see Chapter 12). The early Imams in Oman and the Maghrib were *shâri*, in the sense that as leaders of the *shurât* their function was to establish the Ibâḍi state, politically and militarily. That is confirmed by their title, for while the '*ulamâ'*' (i.e. the *khâṣṣ*) might designate them 'Imams', they were *Amîr al-Mu'minîn* for the ordinary 'soldiery', as is attested not only in classical sources like Shahrastâni and Mas'ûdi, but also by Ibn Durayd who shows that even as late as al-Ṣalt b. Mâlik's time (when he was in Oman) the *shurât* knew the Imam by this title.<sup>6</sup> Similarly in the Maghrib, the Nafûsans styled Abû 'Ubayda Ḥamîd *Amîr al-Mu'minîn*, while the first two Rustamid Imams at least were so addressed, according to the accounts of Abû Zakariyyâ' and Darjîni. That in due course raised the problem of the respective relations of such leaders. So the convention, seemingly developed by Abû Sufyân Maḥbûb, was that the *Amîr* title should be only used when the whole *Arḍ al-Islam* was reunited, whereupon the most suitable leader would be selected by consultation. In the meantime, according to Abû'l-Ḥawâri, the Hadramis, Maghribis, and Omanis each had their own set of '*ulamâ'*' to elect an Imam, mutually recognized without query by the others, although no *ṭâ'a* (obedience) was due from one to the other. There had only been one occasion when all the Ibâḍis recognized a single Imamate, that of Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq. On the other hand, if the people of Khurâsân or Basra set up an Imam he was not recognized until more was known about him, because these places were not joined by the *da'wa* of the (Ibâḍi) Muslims.<sup>7</sup>

So there was no question of whether al-Julandâ was there to conduct war or not. What was in question was whether he had '*ilm*'. To achieve their ends, the Ibâḍis were exploiting rivalry in his family, selecting the grandson of the powerful Jayfar b. al-Julandâ whose line had been bypassed by the cadet brother 'Abd's descent (we know they were holding power when the Najdiyya invaded). So the new Imam could only rule with the advice of a council. And, to emphasize the universality of that advisory body, its three leading members are designated in the *Muṣannaf* with a regional *nisba*, Hilâl b. 'Aṭiyya al-Khurâsâni, Shabîb b. 'Aṭiyya al-'Umâni, and Khalaf b. Ziyâd al-Baḥrâni. True, Shabîb, who stayed on in Oman at Izki (see below), has also been identified by Ibn Baraka as an Omani,<sup>8</sup> but he seems in fact to have been a Khurâsâni (quite likely of Omani stock) and was probably the brother of Hilâl (p.214) who was killed alongside the Imam al-Julandâ. But for later authors, concerned to emphasize the significance of this first Omani Imam, it is important to demonstrate a wide support from other regions (even though there is no evidence that Khalaf himself represented any significant Baḥrayni congregation).

Sixty or so years later the Ibâḍi missionary Munîr b. al-Nayyir al-Riyâmi wrote an account of what he knew of this period, which he obviously got from his father al-Nayyir b. 'Abd al-Malik,<sup>9</sup> to serve as a model for the Imam Ghassân b. 'Abdullâh. According to this, the soldiers (*shurât*)

were organized in contingents of between 200 and 400 under a trusted leader, and responsible for every ten such groups was an *'âlim* fully trained in Basra. Each *shâri* received a stipend of 7 dirhams a month from the *fay'* and many used to return the money not spent. Abstinence was encouraged and a commander who coveted women was instantly dismissed: marriage was only permitted with the approval of the Iraqi-trained *'ulamâ'*. This picture may be idealized, but the fact remains that the early *shurât* were a formidable and often fanatical force, and it was under this term of *shurât* that the Ibâḍi communities feature in the classical sources. But it is also a fact that they were organized under tribal lines, and zealotry could easily degenerate into excesses when ideology and tribalism found common ground, as Munîr indicates had happened. That certainly was the case when the feud resulting from al-Julandâ's Imamate became one of Ibâḍi tribesmen against non-Ibâḍi, but even in establishing his authority there are strong hints that tribal feuding and secular ambitions underlay events, and that it was the *shurât* who really controlled the campaigns. That is probably why they insisted on the execution of Ja'far b. Sa'îd b. 'Abbâd al-Julandâni and his two sons, al-Nazr and Zâ'id, who had led a raid against the 'Muslims', even though it brought tears to the Imam's eyes and he tried to resign. Had he done so, the *Bayân al-Shar'* (Book 68) points out, the *bay'a* would have had to be renewed. It wasn't and the execution was ordered *'alâ l-bay'a*: in other words, it was an Ibâḍi action. Abû'l-Ḥawâri in his letter to the Hadramis writes of the resulting Julandâ feud with the Ibâḍis, but it is worth noting here, although the evidence specific to this period is thin, that the campaigns seem largely to have concentrated on northern Oman, and that in turn may well have played a role in the regional rivalries that were later to play so important a role in the history of the First Imamate.

It is difficult to know what the relations with the outside world and the Caliphate authorities were during al-Julandâ's Imamate. The Ibâḍi campaigns were certainly not confined to the interior and the *shurât* of **(p.215)** southern Arabia invaded Socotra, who probably recognized al-Julandâ, for it was he who consequently appointed an Omani government in the island (see Chapter 9). It may be, too, that the Hinâ'i governors helped hush things up, while the major reorganization of the Caliphate made events in a remote corner of Arabia of little immediate importance. Not so the Şufriyya, who had been operating in the central Caliphate. Driven from Iraq, the remnants took refuge, as so often, in south-western Persia, whereupon Al-Saffâḥ dispatched an expedition under Khâzim b. Khuzayma al-Khurâsâni, largely made up of Khurâsânis and Tamîm from Basra, to deal with the remnants who had entrenched themselves in the island of Barkavan (Laft).<sup>10</sup> On hearing of its approach the majority fled with their Imam to nearby Oman. It is a measure of Ibâḍi-Şufri feeling, or rather its tribal dimension, that immediately the Ibâḍis attacked and defeated them, killing their leader. Khâzim, still in pursuit, crossed over to Julfâr only to find his work done for him. Before leaving, however, he decided to ensure that the Omanis were loyal to the Caliph and demanded their oath of allegiance and the surrender of the Şufri leader's sword and seal. The Imam's council agreed to the latter, but the more belligerent refused the *khuṭba* and *ṭâ'a*. Battle was joined, in which the Imam and his staunchest sup porter, Hilâl b. 'Aṭiyya al-Khurâsâni, were killed. Later sources (notably Abû 'Abdullâh and Abû'l-Mu'thir) rationalized this stance by stating that while verbal *sum'a* and *ṭâ'a* may be given, since it is within the bounds of *taqiyya*, the *bayt al-mâl* may not be surrendered, since the wealth of the orphans, weak, and so on must be defended by the state.

The Propagation of Ibâḍism

---

### The Maghrib

The collapse of the Imamate in Oman and Hadramawt around 133/751 marked the end of the 'Great Arabian Revolt' which had started with Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq. To make matters worse, the situation in Oman had been considerably set back by the Julandâ feud, in which Abû 'Ubayda and Ḥâjib refused to get involved, while in North Africa the Ṣufriyya, who had become active as the first Khâriji sect practising *shirâ'*, were gaining considerable ground. The Ibâḍis might like to present Salâma/Salma b. Sa'd arriving at the same time as the Ṣufri leader, 'riding on the same camel', but that is simply not true, literally nor figuratively; the Ṣufris were there first. 'Ikrima, an ex-slave of Ibn 'Abbâs who possibly adopted 'Khâriji' principles, reputedly went to Qayrawân around the turn of the **(p.216)** first/second century and started propagating Ṣufri doctrine to the Berbers, notably to the Miknâsa through Abû'l-Qâsim Samgu b. Wâsûl, a forebear of the Midrâdid dynasty of Sijilmâsa. While Schacht throws doubt on this, since he died at Medina aged 80 in 105/723-4,<sup>11</sup> it should be noted that 'Ikrima was both a Berber and a highly respected source and is quoted by Jâbir b. Zayd in his correspondence; as too by Mâlik b. Anas, whose school predominated in northern Africa. Whoever their first *dâ'is* in fact were, Ṣufriism had early taken root in the Berber lands, which had been conquered by force (*'anwat<sup>an</sup>*) and massively exploited by the Arabs, initially based on Egypt and then on Qayrawân. In certain cases *jizya* was extracted from tribes in the form of slaves (*'alâ raqîq*), and this levy had developed along the same lines as *kharâj*. Consequently, a population continued to send women and children into slavery even though it had become Muslim, just as their lands remained subject to the original impositions, despite conversion to Islam. In this way, large numbers of Berbers were sent eastwards. So resistance grew and found justification in Khâriji ideology. 'Umar II tried to rectify the situation by sending *tâbi'is* as missionaries propagating Islam based on Qayrawân, but his reforms brought only temporary amelioration and later governors had few legal scruples. In 122/740 'Umar b. 'Abdullâh al-Murâdi, governor of the Tanger region, tried to take the fifth in kind from all the Berbers (*takhmîs al-Barbar*) whatever their status, claiming they were the *fay'* of the Muslims, and this led to a major Ṣufri uprising, with two major victories in 122 and 123 (740-1), before a major Khâriji defeat in 125/743.<sup>12</sup>

Nevertheless, Ibâḍi propaganda was probably not far behind. Whatever the truth about Salâma/Salma b. Sa'd, one of the ten propagandists sent by 'Umar II was Abû Mas'ûd Sa'd b. Mas'ûd al-Tujîbi, and it was his brother, 'Abdullâh b. Mas'ûd al-Tujîbi, who raised the first Ibâḍi revolt in Tripoli and was executed by 'Abd al-Raḥmân b. Ḥabîb in 126/744.<sup>13</sup> 'Umar II, as we have seen was not unfavourable to the Ibâḍis and may well have included sympathizers among those he sent out to pacify the Berbers. Tripolitania remained the centre of Ibâḍism for some time, with the main support coming from the Hawwâra. While the Tujîbi was no more than a chief, a rather more complicated situation developed with his successors, a sort of duel leadership between 'Abd al-Jabbâr b. Qays al-Murâdi and al-'Ḥârith b. Talîd al-Ḥaḍrami, the latter seemingly a qadi: they were successful in gaining adherents amongst the Zanâta and Nafûsa. But clearly all was not well, for they killed each other (131 or 132). This led Abû 'Ubayda and Ḥâjib to send a letter exhorting **(p.217)** the Ibâḍis to eschew division and sectarianism, and recommending *wuqûf* with regards to the status of the two deceased.<sup>14</sup> They were followed by (Abû'l-Zâjir) Ismâ'il b. Ziyâd al-Nafûsi, perhaps the first to be designated as Imam in Tripolitania, who extended power to Gabès, but was defeated by the Arab governor of Qayrawân. It is perhaps worth noting a predominance of 'Yamanis' in the first missionaries to

come to Ifrîqiya. Salâma/Salma b. Sa' d and al-Ḥârith b. Talîd were Hadramis,<sup>15</sup> the Tujîbis (Kinda) and Murâd were of South Arabian origins, while the leader of the next wave, Abû'l-Khaṭṭâb, was a Yemeni Ḥimyari.

#### Basra

These events in Oman and Ifrîqiya clearly indicated the need for a major rethink by the Basran leadership: the message was universal and it was time to take the movement in hand. Quietism was finished, at least outside of Basra where *taqiyya* remained essential, and the emphasis was on *shirâ' jihâd* to establish the true Ibâḍi state. As Al-Salmi points out, the emphasis in the *siyar* was that faith included both words and deeds (*qawl wa 'amal*). There is a resounding passage in Wâ'il b. Ayyûb al-Ḥaḍrami's proclamation of faith: 'Death ... to those who oppress the people of religion after they have been advised of the *da'wa* and shown its proofs, and no end to the killing of the people of lies until they come to believe God ... and rejection of those ... who call to faith by word without deed ...' This is very much echoed later in Hûd b. Maḥkam's *Tafsîr*: 'The hypocrites say but do not do (*qâlû wa lam yaf' alû*), but the believers are those who have a full belief joining deed and word (*al-mustakmilîn li'l-qawl wa'l-'amal*).'

But there was also another problem: in Oman at least, *fiqh* was pretty primitive; Abû Ubayda was told that the Omanis made legal decisions based on opinion (*yuftûn bi'l-râ'y*).<sup>16</sup> That was, in fact, less shocking than it might sound. Because of the lack of legislative material in the Qur'ân, early *fiqh* was the independent exercise of intelligence, quasi-synonymous with *ra'y* and distinct from *'ilm*. 'Umar on his deathbed recommended solutions based on the Qur'ân, followed by a list starting with the *Muhâjirûn* and *Anṣâr*, and the first three Caliphs mainly relied on their personal judgement, only rarely relating to a precedent set by the Prophet. So amongst the *tâbi'în* there were *fuqahâ' wa 'ulamâ'*, the latter essentially concerned with the transmission of knowledge from precedent (*âthâr*), and this duality continued in the next generation.<sup>17</sup> As we have seen, (p.218) Jâbir b. Zayd was a *faqîh*, and like Sa'îd b. al-Musayyab (d. 94/713), who was known in his lifetime as the greatest expert in *fiqh* matters, he offers little or no explanation of how he arrived at his judgements: similarly al-Rabî'. Nevertheless, by Abû 'Ubayda's time a consensual view had developed among the early Ibâḍis on a wide range of issues involved in what was generically termed *fiqh*, including, amongst others, Jâbir's jurisprudence, and this constituted the *'ilm aṣḥâbinâ*, the *âthâr* which it was the duty of the *fuqahâ'* to know. That did not invalidate the old form of *ra'y*, as is evident from a study of the *Âthâr* of al-Rabî' and the *Mudaw-wana*, but it had to take into consideration the transmitted *'ilm*. It was only later, much later, that an attempt was made to rationalize this early *fiqh-cum-'ilm* in terms of *'ilm al-ḥadîth* and the Ibâḍis tried to raise the lineage of their *âthâr* (*rafa' al-'ilm*) to the level of Prophetic sayings.

I would suggest, therefore, that it was now that the Basran Ibâḍis really took charge and started controlling the *da'wa* both in instructing the true *'ilm* and giving it effect, rather than leaving it to local initiative. Now, at last, we find Abû 'Ubayda joining with Ḥâjib in calling the Ibâḍis to *jihâd*<sup>18</sup> and beginning to play that role of both spiritual and temporal guide which the rationalized Ibâḍi history attributed to him alone. So we find a group of future missionaries

coming to Basra to study with him, five of whom returned to establish the true state in the Maghrib towards the end of the 130s (early 750s), around the time the 'Abbasids take power.

### Propagation

Before examining further progress in the movement, a few general words need saying about the way Ibâḍism was propagated. In the diffusion of any ideology both temporal and spatial dimensions need to be examined to understand how and where it took root or failed, and how it was modified as it spread. With Ibâḍism we have a fairly simple initial model, diffusion from a single node, Basra. There were five main potential diffusion paths: tribal networks, merchant networks, the Hajj (*hajj*), missionaries, and the written word. We may disregard urban networks. There were Ibâḍis in Kûfa, Mosul, Baghdad, Miṣr (Cairo), and these, notably the Kûfa school, may have been influential for theological debate within the Ibâḍi movement itself, and themselves perhaps influenced by the prevailing 'school' of their city (Ḥanafi at Kûfa); but politically they were of no real importance, though Cairo may have later served as something of a relay centre for the Maghrib. There was no chance of Ibâḍism implanting in the core centres within the Caliphate, any more than Khârijism of any kind had been able to make progress in Syria. Rather it was in the **(p.219)** peripheries of Empire, in areas inimical to a centralized Arab rule under a Qurashi dynasty and their Hijazi acolytes, that the best chances lay. There were three principal arenas. The first was in Arabia, more specifically in Greater Bahrayn (including Yamâma), Greater Oman, and Greater Yemen; and it was in these regions that Khârijî states of various kinds were established early on and the first Ibâḍi Imamates set up and failed. The second was the Berber regions in Ifrîqiya and Maghrib, areas of considerable civilization, which were prepared to accept Islam but not Arab hegemony. The third were parts of Persia, notably Khurâsân and Seistan, where Ibâḍi propaganda early made ground.<sup>19</sup>

One of the most important characteristics of the Basran centre is that a single authority did not direct it. Grossmann is quite right when he sees the *ḥalqa* of the post-Imamate period in the Maghrib as a continuity of the Basran proto-'*ḥalqa*', a school grouped around teachers who would in turn transmit the true faith. Such a group of *ahl al-ṭarîq* is always made up of instructors and those who obey ('*âmir, ma'mûr*), and it is significant that the term Abû 'Abdullâh Muḥammad b. Bakr (who first formalized the *ḥalqa* institution in the Maghrib in the fifth century) uses to designate the teachers is *ḥamalat al-Qur'ân*, those who have preserved by heart God's Book (see Chapter 14). It is this state of spiritual 'pregnancy', an ability to give forth to others, which lies at the heart of all Ibâḍi teaching and why the term used for it is *ḥaml al-'ilm*. By its very nature, such a teacher-learner relationship was based on an oral tradition, transmitting a consensual view elaborated by each generation and passed on to the next. The cementing bond of that relationship is designated *walâya*. And as a sense of Ibâḍi identity strengthened as deeds were added to words, so did the doctrine of *walâya wa barâ'a*, association and dissociation, evolve.

### Walâya wa barâ'a

*Walâyat Allâh li'l-Muminîn (Jâmi' al-Bisyâni)* is the fundamental relationship that binds God and his community, and hence members of that community to each other; or as Ennami puts it, 'friendly association through God'. Indeed, later, *walâya* and its opposite *barâ'a* were considered one of God's *ṣifât*.<sup>20</sup> Basically *walâya* is given to anyone who calls you to (true) Islam: the *kâfir* is

excluded (*wa inna al-kâfirîn lâ mawlâ lahum*). It is thus a collective relationship and corresponds in some measure to the concept of *sanctitas* and the *sancti* of the early Church, existing **(p.220)** only at the collective and not the individual level of 'sainthood'. *Allâh huwa al-walîy* and his followers are the *awliyâ'*. The basic concept is that of 'friendship', *ḥabîb al-mu'minîn*, in contrast with *'adû al-kâfirîn*, and that friendship comports the mutual obligations which Allah as *walîy al-mu'minîn* bestows on his community, those of *ḥfz, nṣr, 'wn, ṣlh, kfy*, as the martyr, the testifier (*shâhid*) witnesses. It is no coincidence that this notion of *shahâda* is identical with its evolution in early Christianity where the word 'martyr' derives from the Greek meaning 'a witness'. Someone in *walâya*, naturally, is saved in the afterlife. The innate sense of *wlâ* also comports the reciprocal relationship of *patronus*, the *mawlâ (mawâlî)*, both the master and the owned, the friend, the protected, the close family (*ibn 'amm*), and so on: whence (although it is originally a Sunni tradition), the notion that *mawlâ al-qawm minhum*, all are equals in the eyes of God.

The opposite of all this is *br'*; God says *bara'a min al-fâsiqîn wa'l-kâfirîn*. Hence the notion that developed by which one or other status is obligatory (*farḍ*). So *walâya* and *barâ'a* are passed on from generation to generation. Each may build on what his predecessor has transmitted, for the gates of *ijtihâd* are never closed (although that concept only entered Ibâḍism late), but one cannot change what has been mutually decided. Thus the Omani sources emphasize that at the time of the civil war that brought to an end the First Imamate there was no divergence over *walâya* and *barâ'a* until after the time of al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥawâri and 'Azzân b. al-Ṣaqr, who were like the eyes in the same head.<sup>21</sup> But as the nature of the *ḥalqa* clearly demonstrates, interpretation of the law and theological debate was for an elite. 'Ilm was the prerogative of the few; obedience to God's laws the duty of all. There was very much a *khâṣṣ* and *'âmm* amongst the Ibâḍis. Decisions about *walâya* and *barâ'a* could only be taken by those who had the learning, the leading *'ulamâ'* of each generation; hence the later development of the *ḥamalât al-'ilm* lists, those recognized as forming our predecessors (*aṣḥâbunâ*). The inviolability of certain early figures is emphasized by a *sîra* to the people of Khurâsân written in the 4/10<sup>th</sup> century, but which Al-Salmi<sup>22</sup> believes incorporates a work of the Basran 'Imam' Wâ'il b. Ayyûb al-Ḥaḍrami. The writer specifies 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭâb, 'Abdullâh b. Mas'ûd, Jâbir b. Zayd, al-Julandâ b. Mas'ûd, al-Rabî' b. Ḥabîb, (Abû Sufyân) Maḥbûb b. al-Ruḥayl, Mûsâ b. 'Ali, (Abû 'Abdullâh) Muḥammad b. Maḥbûb, and others of their ilk: if anyone testifies against them then he should be called on to repent or be banned. It is interesting to note, in passing, the absence of Abû 'Ubayda, and that the one Companion selected is Ibn Mas'ûd (d. 32/652). This is not because he was a transmitter (Ibn 'Abbâs is the great Ibâḍi source), but because he opposed 'Uthmân and possibly met his end at his behest, **(p.221)** as Abû'l-Mu'thir emphasizes in his *Ṣifa*.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, it is to be noted that Abu 'Ubayda considered him and 'Abdallâh b. Sallâm, as well as Ibn 'Abbâs, as pre-eminent Companions in the Ibâḍi school.<sup>24</sup> Even so, he may have remained something of a controversial figure, as indicated by Shabîb b. 'Aṭiyya's antipathy towards him, for according to Darjîni the first Ibâḍi schism in the Maghrib took the name of 'Umayriyya from a certain 'Isâ b. 'Umayr who based their school (*yastanadûn madhhabuhum*) on 'Abdullâh b. Mas'ûd.<sup>25</sup> Wâ'il repeats that the *walâya* for those aforementioned Imams of the religion (*â'immat al-dîn*) is well known and inherited by the Muslims. Similarly Abû Ya'qûb al-Warjlâni holds as the greatest authorities after the Qur'ân and the Prophet Abû 'Abdullâh Muḥammad b. Maḥbûb (d. 260/873) and the aforementioned 'Azzân b. al-Ṣaqr (d. 268/881-2). In

other words, the Ibâdis had their own line of transmission, which devolved on each generation and formed *âthâr aṣḥâbinâ*, and certain of these figures were inviolate. No one could retrospectively question their respectability as formulators of the Ibâdi doctrine.

## Disputes

### Qadarism and Mu'tazilism

*Barâ'a* originally concerned two basic issues: those leading personalities whom the Ibâdis condemned ('Uthmân, 'Ali, etc.) and unacceptable doctrines. The latter early led to splits in the Ibâdi community. Probably the first of significance was the issue of *qadar*.

As shown in Chapter 5, van Ess<sup>26</sup> maintains that originally the Ibâdis were not opposed to Qadarite ideas and suggests that Ibn Ibâd himself was favourably inclined, which is why, when the doctrine became proscribed, his position in the movement was marginalized. Crone and Zimmerman have shown that this ingenious idea does not really stand up and I have found nothing to indicate that the early Ibâdis were favourable. On the contrary, Abû Muḥammad al-Nahdi condemned al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri (d. 110/728) for being soft on the matter, as too did Ṣuḥâr b. al-'Abd. The strongest reaction, however, came from Ḥâjib al-Ṭâ'iy, who seems to have drawn Abû 'Ubayda in his wake. The *K. Abi Sufyân* records that Ḥamza al-Kûfi was discussing his ideas with Abû 'Ubayda and the pair of them (p.222) went to see Ḥâjib who, Abû Sufyân states, Ḥamza feared more (further evidence of his real leadership at the time). Ḥâjib clearly suspected that Ḥamza had been influenced by the prominent Qadarite Ghaylân (al-Dimashqi), but he denied any frequentation outside Ibâdi circles. In brief, the ensuing discussion went along the following lines. 'So where did you get these ideas from? There is no one you know whom I do not, except Jâbir [b. Zayd].' 'From you!' 'Well I disclaim it and so must you.' But Ḥamza continued to propound his view to the effect: 'What is good comes from God, what is bad from man. God only imposes on the individual what he is capable of.' The political implication was that a ruler was responsible for his actions,<sup>27</sup> the theological that one must not 'ascribe evil to God'. This became an essentially Mu'tazili argument,<sup>28</sup> and Ḥâjib was not prepared to accept it. So Abû 'Ubayda organized a meeting at which Ḥâjib declared that Ḥamza and 'Aṭiyya were causing trouble and had them expelled (*barâ'a*) from the community, whereupon Ḥamza moved to Mosul. On their side, Abû 'Ubayda and Ḥâjib laid out their views in a *sîra* to a certain al-Faḍl b. Kathîr,<sup>29</sup> whom they advised not to discuss this divisive issue. Their standpoint is summarized at the start of the letter, even before the *amma ba'd*; *wa lâ yublagh riḍâhu illâ bi ni'matihi wa lâ yumtana'u min ma'siyatihi illâ bi mannihi*. Or as Wâ'il b. Ayyûb pronounced: we reject those who deny divine will and dispute God's power; his affairs are ordained for those who worship him (*wa'l-radd 'alâ man qâl lâ qadar wa nâza'a Allâh fî sulṭânihi; wa anna umûrahu mufawwaḍa ilâ al-'Ibâd*).<sup>30</sup>

Nevertheless, it is clear that there was difference of opinion, and the accounts in Darjîni and Shammâkhi indicate that Abû 'Ubayda himself was not totally decided. As Montgomery Watt (1974) has pointed out, the lines between Khâriji, Mu'tazili, Qadari, and even Murji'i thought were by no means clear-cut, and someone like Ghaylân was called by all four labels for different aspects of his teaching, in the same way as the slightly younger Wâsil was called by the first three, depending on what viewpoint was being taken. It is dangerous to assume from what al-Ash'ari, Ibn Nadîm, and the heresiographers later wrote that the Ibâdi view was a consensual one. The names they quote are certainly not to the fore in the Ibâdi pantheon, at least not in

Basra. As far as Abû 'Ubayda and Ḥâjib were concerned, they considered that Ḥamza was going too **(p.223)** far,<sup>31</sup> and would much prefer the issue not to be discussed. 'Abû Ubay-da's own formulation was that God was Omnipotent and Omniscient and his knowledge was what happened; while that implies predestination it does not mean that God determines man's acts. Since man is incapable of doing anything outside God's knowledge he used a rather simplistic formula when confronted by a Qadarite, forcing his challenger to give a yes-no answer over God's omniscience, rather like the question 'Have you stopped beating your wife?' The Qadarite answers, 'O Abû 'Ubayda, these are the arguments of the weak people'; but when Abû 'Ubayda insists on an answer to the question as formulated he goes on his way.<sup>32</sup>

The whole question came really to hang on what was God's knowledge and volition. If God is immutable, eternal, then His attributes are of a different level; and that includes His Will. And from that stems the whole issue of trial and test, and the nature of His Justice, essentially for the Good. As eventually adumbrated, the Mu'tazili view was that God does not create man's acts, but gives him the power, ability (*qudra, istiṭâ'a*), to choose for himself. But that choice is guided by God's Justice, which conceptually is essentially the same as man's; God does not do unjust acts. It thereby excludes all idea of predestination, for it would be unjust for God to predetermine whether a person is saved or damned unless he has merited it by his acts: it is for man to decide his fate by choosing whether to believe or not, to obey or disobey the Law. True, the Qur'ân says He will lead astray (*yuḍillu*) whom He wishes and lead (*yahdi*) whom He wishes on the right path, but this does not mean he predestines. And His Will is for the benefit of mankind, for God does not have needs. He shows where the Truth is and recompenses those who follow it, putting them on the path of Paradise in the next world: similarly, He judges and puts them on the way to hell if they have chosen to go astray.<sup>33</sup> This strained interpretation of Qur'ânic verse was rejected by Sunnis and Ibâḍis alike. However, the early Ibâḍi position is not that far away, for in one of Abû 'Ubayda and Ḥâjib's joint *sîras* they state, *kanat al-ma 'ṣiya ba'd al ṭa'a wa'l-kufr ba'd al-iyman ... al tawba ba'd al-iqrâr* (rebellion comes after obedience, etc.), in other words, it is man's will that pushes him on the wrong course. And interestingly, Ḥâjib in his own *Sîra* uses the verb *kasaba* as the equivalent of *istiṭâ'a* (*wa lahum mâ kasabû walakum mâ kasabtum*), which shows the concept of empowerment was current, even if its full theological and legal elaborations had not been developed.

Similarly, how far the debate and its consequences concerning God's **(p.224)** attributes and the distinction between *ṣifât al-dhât* (attributes of essence) and *ṣifât al-fi'l* (attributes of action) had developed, or was known to the Ibâḍi leaders at this stage, is a moot question and is discussed further in Chapter 9. All the indications are that the argument in Basran Ibâḍi circles remained at a relatively primitive level and it is dangerous to presuppose that the views of the next generation were those of the earlier. Indeed, Abû 'Ubayda must also have known his was a weak way out for countering Mu'tazili-Qadari doctrine, for his refutation of Jabri dogma that God's knowledge was coercive is rather more subtle. In any case, the early debate continued to evolve, as Al-Salmi shows.<sup>34</sup> The final word seems to have been pronounced by Aḥmad b. 'Abdullâh al-Kindi (author of the *Muṣannaf*) in his *K. al-Jawhari*, where he holds that the argument is not really about *qadar* itself, but whether its nature is divisible or not (*qism al-jawhar*); in other words, the validity of the atomistic theories of substances and accidents (*jawâhir wa'l- a'râḍ*), and Nazzâm's (d. 221/836) anti-atomistic theory of *kumûn* (hiding) and *ẓuhûr* (appearing), a



translation of the Aristotelian conception of change as a transition from potentiality to actuality.<sup>35</sup> His own view is essentially that God is *qadîr* in all things and never deviates from justice (very much an Ash'ari article of faith), and that it is indivisible.

Such late development of Ibâḍi theology was quasi-philosophical and strongly influenced by Sunni-Ash'arism, as too Mâturîdi. But it is important to realize that the Ibâḍis had evolved their own formulations, probably influenced by, and in parallel with, other major schools before Ash'ari's conversion from Mu'tazilism in 300 AH. Abû'l-Mu'thir's exposé concerning free will is quite clear, and dates to before the end of the 3/9<sup>th</sup> century. The nub is that man cannot act independently; he can only act because he is empowered by God through His Support and Grace. That, as far as I can make out, is also the gist of the argument between Wâsil and Abû 'Ubayda when they met on the Hajj, if Mulayḥ's report is genuine. God empowers men's acts, seems to be what Abû 'Ubayda is saying. But Abû'l-Mu'thir goes further in the argument and uses the concept of *kasb* (originally developed by Ḍirâr and Najjâr,<sup>36</sup> and which became central to Ash'arism), that is, while man can acquire knowledge by his efforts it is only through God's Power. God created His *kasb*, just as he did His creature's acts, good and evil, in the same way as He created *iyman* and *kufir*, right and wrong, and so on. As we shall see in Chapter 9, this creation of moral opposites was a theme developed much earlier in the century by Abû 'Abdullâh, Abû Sufyân's son, and was followed by his own son Bashîr, who was more or less a contemporary of Abû'l-Mu'thir. **(p.225)** So God created good and evil, and so on, but the decision of which to choose was only possible because God had empowered men's acts. But it is never *jawr*. One cannot attribute a bad term to God. It would only be *jawr* if doing the prohibited were ordained. This is the essential argument used also to reject another view held by some of the Mu'tazila: that God only wants *iyman* from his people and not *kufir*. That itself is a *kufir*, Abû'l-Mu'thir declares: as too those who say that God chastises with hellfire but then removes them from it. There is no forgiveness, as Qur'ân Sûra al-Sajda, 20, makes clear.

So right from the start Abû 'Ubayda and Ḥâjib pronounced that the Ibâḍis absolutely rejected the Qadari-Mu'tazili notion that what is good comes from God and evil from man. Nevertheless, it is relevant to note for the early development of their theology and relations with the Mu'tazila that they hold al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri in the intermediary status of *wuqûf*; that is, they are not sure about him. This may in part be because that they did not want to condemn so popular a figure, but it was also because much of what he said was acceptable (as will be shown when discussing Hûd's *Tafsîr*), and that included his views that the grave sinner was *munâfiq* and will be eternally punished. It was his pupil, Wâsil b. 'Aṭâ' (d. 131/748-9),<sup>37</sup> who reputedly developed a new formulation of a sort of middle way, the famous *manzila bayn al-manzilatayn*. But as Montgomery Watt has also shown, that is not incompatible with 'Khârijî' ideas, for it was all part of a casting around to find some intermediary class between *mushrik* and *mu'min*. But unlike the Murji'ites who used the term *irjâ'* (cf. Qur'ân IX, 106) to place the fate of the person committing a major sin (*ṣâhib kabîra*) in suspension, or as one might say today, 'on hold' (*irjâ'*), of God's decision, he had no doubts of the ultimate fate; but he did consider the term *nifâq* and *kufir* over-used, and so adopted the Qur'ânic term *fâsiq* to specify a third class, neither *mu'min* nor *kâfir*, thus giving birth to the development of an intermediary position. But like al-Ḥasan and all the Khawârij, he did not condone the crime and was equally categorical that the *fâsiq* was *munâfiq* and damned. At the same time, he did develop the concept of *wuqûf*, postponing judgement, of

standing aloof (*i'tizâl*) where there was dispute, in the interest of keeping the community united. In this connection it is relevant to note that in Syria, where Ghaylân held that a ruler was responsible for his acts and could be deposed, and that there was no precedence in Quraysh, Qadarite views became politically influential from the time of Hishâm, and came to a head in Yazid III's revolt against Walîd II (126/744).<sup>38</sup> And in view of anti-Umayyad sentiment (**p.226**) in Yemen, it is worth noting that the Thaqafi governor had Wahb b. Munabbih tortured in 110/728 for his Qadarite views.<sup>39</sup> In Basra they never overtly became political (although several prominent Qadarites joined Ibn al-Ash'ath's revolt), probably because they were toned down by Mu'tazili influence.

The fundamental Ibâdi position opposed such moderating views. Writing of how other members of the *qawm* could live and be protected by the Ibâdis so long as they kept quiet, Sâlim b. Dhakwân twice points out (§§65 l.534 and §117, ll. 849-50) that did not mean the Muslims (Ibâdis) accepted their error (*ḍalâla*), for there was no intermediary position (*manzila*) between right and wrong (*ḥaqq wa bâṭil*, cf. Qur'ân XIII, 18). In other words the Ibâdis were prepared to tolerate Muslims with ideas they knew to be wrong, so long as they did not openly contradict them. But that was as far as they were ready to condone error in the interest of holding the Muslim community together; that was not the same thing as saying they were suspending judgement over them. *Wuqûf*, as will become apparent, was a dangerous barque, and was sailing too close to the wind of the *shukkâk* for the conservative element in Oman. It was only permitted when there really was genuine doubt after examining all sides of the debate, or elucidating the facts over disputed injustices. It most certainly did not mean suspending judgement as a solution when faced with a dispute, however desirable that might be for political reasons or for holding the community together. There was no compromise over right and wrong.

All this helps to explain how Qadarism and Mu'tazilism were effectively twinned by the Ibâdis. But it would be surprising indeed if the Ibâdis of Basra were not influenced by Mu'tazili doctrine, which developed a huge influence during the period they were propagating their own ideas there (even though they did not always convince the Omanis). Certainly in the early days, when both were feeling their way, there was a convergence in certain theological views. So although the Ibâdis increasingly repudiated Mu'tazili dogma, particularly their late formulations, and the use of *'aql*, that is, that certain knowledge is accessible to man through human intelligence, their theology reflects the early *kalâm* debates, at least with respect to *tashbîh* and the Created Qur'ân, two issues in which they continue to diverge from Sunni-Ash'arite views.<sup>40</sup> With regards to Imamate theory too there was a degree of consensus over removing the unjust Imam, for the early Mu'tazila were at least neutral about the precedence (**p.227**) of Quraysh. But in the same way as they rejected Murji'ite doctrine over deferring judgement concerning 'Uthmân and 'Ali, the Ibâdis perforce reacted when the Mu'tazila in turn started propounding a similar approach. Even so, the fact that they suspended judgement about 'Â'isha, Ṭalḥa, and al-Zubayr might not have been altogether unwelcome, since many Omanis had been involved on the wrong side in the Battle of the Camel and had then supported Ibn al-Zubayr. But once they started actually exculpating 'Uthmân and 'Ali and expressed preference for a Qurashi to a non-Qurashi as Imam, then the Ibâdis, as inheritors of the Muḥakkima tradition, could do no other than diverge strongly from Mu'tazili political views.

### The Shu'aybiyya/Shah'biyya

Some of these debates are also present in an important schism that early developed within the Ibâḍi community itself, that of the Shu'aybiyya. This is a complicated matter about which I am not altogether clear. Several issues are involved, not just the early debates about *qudra*, *shâkk*, and intermediary positions, but more developed arguments about figurative or literal interpretations of terminology in the Qur'ân, the vision of God (*rûya/ru'yâ*),<sup>41</sup> His speech (*kalam*), His attributes, as too, at some point, the use of analogical reasoning (*qiyâs* a limited form of *ra'y* for interpreting '*uṣûl*'). At this early stage the whole question of God's attributes in Ibâḍi debate were lumped under the term *tashbîh*.<sup>42</sup> Apparently Shu'ayb, Abû'l-Mu'arrij 'Umar b. Muḥammad [al-Sadûsi], and 'Abdullâh b. 'Abd al-'Azîz considered any notion of anthropomorphism as a *shirk*, in other words, a denial of God's Unity (*tawḥîd*). So it was not just *rûya* and the vision (*nazar*) of God on the day of resurrection, or sitting on a throne, but presumably any aspect of God that makes Him a body (*jism*) with corporeal attributes, or human overtones. Such a view would accord with extreme Mu'tazili doctrine, and also that of the Jahmiyya (the followers of Jahm b. Ṣafwân, executed 128/746). The latter, according to 'Awtabi,<sup>43</sup> stated that there was no '*ilm*, *sam*' ; *baṣar* until God created them. So Abû 'Ubayda had them expelled from his *majlis*, but they (or at least Abû'l-Mu'arrij and 'Abdullâh b. 'Abd al-'Azîz) repented and, through the intermediary of al-Rabî' b. Ḥabîb and Ḥâjib al-Ṭâ'iy, were **(p. 228)** reintegrated.<sup>44</sup> Indeed, the former was sent back to the people of Qidam in his Yemeni homeland to bring them back into the straight and narrow, but he died before arriving and is consequently held in a *wuqûf* status.<sup>45</sup>

It is probable that either two Shu'aybs have been amalgamated, one of which was the eponym of the Shu'aybiyya, a sub-sect listed by the heresiographers of the Ajârida,<sup>46</sup> a Khârîji grouping that found its main ground in Khurâsân: or, much more likely, it was the name of the later fully attested Shu'ayb b. Ma'rûf al-Miṣri (see below), retrospectively attached to an earlier form of essentially theological dispute among Abû 'Ubayda's pupils. The likelihood of the latter is also indicated by the fact that Shu'ayb is given no further names in its earlier development, either in the Omani or Maghribi sources, while Ibn al-Sallâm (p. 114) only mentions the two historic figures (Abû'l-Mu'arrij and 'Abdullâh b. 'Abd al-'Azîz) as disputing their master's opinion. 'Awtabi and al-Bisyâni specify three names associated with the early form, Ayyûb al-Ṣawwâf, Shu'ayb b. Ma'rûf, and 'Abdullâh b. 'Abd al-'Azîz; followed later by al-Hârûn.

The anthropomorphism issue of itself cannot have been too divisive, for the Ibâḍis seem to consider corporeal attributes of the Almighty and the vision of God in this world and at the resurrection as basically metaphorical, in accordance with Mu'tazili views. It seems to have been settled fairly early, for Wâ'il b. Ayyûb condemns *rûya* along with *tashbîh* in his *Sîra* and it is repeated in the debate with Hârûn (see below). It is also implied in Hûd b. Maḥkam's *Tafsîr*. The reasoning behind these decisions at this stage, however, is not very clear. On the whole, the Ibâḍis were, in the present writer's view, generally being reactive rather than proactive with respect to theological matters; but I am prepared to defer to Madelung, who argues that Khârîjite anti-anthropomorphism developed in parallel with, but not independently of, Mu'tazili theology.<sup>47</sup> But there is nothing to indicate that such subtle distinctions made by later Ibâḍi theologians<sup>48</sup> between the essential attributes (*ma'nâ*) being eternal but their manifestations (*bughd*, '*adawa*, etc.) as created were current at the time; certainly not if the rather simplistic

views of the Omani 'ulamâ' over the Creation of the Qur'ân are anything to go by (Chapter 9). Rather like the earlier debate over Qadarism, it would seem to have been the extremism of the dissidents in declaring any form of anthropomorphism as a *shirk* that led to the quarrel, and why it was patched up reasonably easily.

**(p.229) The Nukkarite schism**

However, some aspects of these debates became manifest again during the time that al-Rabî' was the leading figure in Basra, when Abû'l-Mu'arrij and 'Abdullâh b. 'Abd al-'Azîz disputed his opinions on grounds of analogical reasoning (*qiyâs*),<sup>49</sup> which indicates that this thorny issue was already getting an airing (it was finally accepted, see Chapter 14). Some of their ideas were taken up by Shu'ayb b. al-Mu'arrif (cf. Ma'rûf above) al-Miṣri, an Egyptian Ibâḍi who had indeed studied in Basra (possibly under Abû 'Ubayda), and was responsible for exporting certain of these schismatic ideas to the Maghrib. When in Iraq, his ideas had been influenced by the Kûfan, 'Abdullâh b. Yazîd al-Fazâri (another associate was Ibn 'Umayr b. 'Isâ), and it was their doctrine that was developed by the Nukkarites, who also apparently accepted *qiyâs* in their jurisprudence:<sup>50</sup> Kûfa, it will be remembered was also much influenced by Ḥanafism. Al-Fazâri<sup>51</sup> was the real intellectual behind the theology of this movement, in Iraq at least, and his views may possibly reflect a division between regional schools, rather as there were in Mu'tazilism. An anti-Qadarite, he took part in the open debates organized by Yaḥyâ b. Khâlid al-Barmaki along with his business partner, Hishâm b. al-Ḥakam (d. prob. 179/795-6), himself the leading Imâmi *mutakallim*, but as a consequence had to take refuge in Yemen, which may explain how some of the ground had already been prepared there for Hârûn's schism.

Such differences developed into a major schism as they became absorbed into the doctrine of the Nukkarites, those who 'denied' the authority of the second Rustamid Imam, 'Abd al-Wahhâb b. 'Abd al-Raḥmân. When 'Abd al-Raḥmân was dying (168 or 171/788) he appointed a council (*shûrâ*) of six, on the model of 'Umar, which included the two favourite candidates, one his son, 'Abd al-Wahhâb, and the other Mas'ûd al-Andalus.<sup>52</sup> The debate had swayed backwards and forwards during a month or more, with the general population in favour of Mas'ûd. Eventually 'Abd al-Wahhâb was selected, partly through the support of another member of the council, Ibn Fendin (Abû Qudâma Yazîd b. Fandîn, an Ifrâni Berber), but at the swearing-in ceremony he made his oath conditional on a accepting an advisory council of the leading 'ulamâ' (*jamâ'a ma'lûma*). This was challenged by Mas'ûd, who, on dutifully giving his oath to 'Abd al-Wahhâb, declared the principle of *lâ shart* (**(p.230)** 'alâ'l-imâm (no conditions may be imposed on the Imam), except God's Book and the Prophet's Sunna and *âthâr al-ṣâliḥîn* (interestingly, this last phrase in current use in early days is in Abû Zakariyyâ', but not the later Darjîni version<sup>53</sup>). The issue focused on whether working with a permanent council constituted a *shart* (which all agreed was *bâṭil*), and whether an Imam could be replaced with someone who was considered better. So two messengers (i.e. two reliable witnesses) were sent to the Mashriq to seek advice. En route they passed by Miṣr (Cairo), where they found Shu'ayb, who hastened off to Tahert with his followers without consulting the rest of the Egyptian Ibâḍis. The messengers then carried on to Mecca (the Hajj season?), where they found al-Rabî' and his companions<sup>54</sup> and expounded the situation to him. The Mashriqis wrote a joint letter in reply, stipulating the *lâ shart* principle and that it was impossible for an Imam to work with a standing committee (how could he order a *ḥadd* punishment or deal with an enemy force if every time he had to wait for

the chosen members—who might well be widely scattered—to assemble?), and that the precedent of Abû Bakr's selection demonstrated that even though there might be more favourable candidates, the choice once made was definitive (see Chapter 12).

In the meantime, Shu'ayb had arrived at Tahert and seen the Imam. He had cleverly replied that of course imposing conditions was wrong, but avoided stating whether a committee constituted such a *shart*, and that while agreeing it was possible to give *walâya* to someone more learned in the *jamâ'a*, failed to address the issue of replacement. Immediately afterwards he saw Ibn Fendin, fearful of what the reply from Mecca would be, and basically said, 'What are you waiting for?' So war broke out, in which Ibn Fendin was killed; Shu'ayb fled and established himself in Tripolitania. On learning of this al-Rabî' held a *majlis* in which it was agreed to recognize 'Abd al-Wahhâb and excommunicate (*barâ'a*) his opponents, unless they made a repentance. It is interesting to compare the situation of the Mashriqis, where we see the powerful al-Rabî' operating in full consultation with his fellows and subscribing to a joint letter, as in a *jamâ' alḥalqa*, with that of the authority they accorded an openly declared Imam, which disallowed such an advisory body as a fixed institution; further evidence that neither he, nor anyone else, was an Imam in Basra. This Mashriqi support for 'Abd al-Wahhâb is almost certainly the origin of the adjective Wahbiyya to describe the 'orthodox' Ibâḍi line, and it led **(p. 231)** to even closer contacts between the Maghribis and Mashriqis. One interesting feature is that 'Abd al-Wahhâb sent al-Rabî' a large sum of money to purchase Mashriqi equipment and material, who sent it accompanied by his own brother. When he reached Tahert, the Imam instructed the merchants to buy, and it was sold out within eight days!<sup>55</sup> He also sent 1,000 dinars to the Basrans to send him books, which they busily copied and sent forty loads. It was under 'Abd al-Wahhâb that the Tahert Imamate was really consolidated and another set of schismatics, the Wâṣiliyya, who had tried to profit from the disturbances, were also dealt with, helped by a Nafûsan army. As I read it, the Wâṣiliyya were the extremist element amongst the Mu'tazila and once again the revolt was essentially political, an attempt by the Zanâta nomads to break away from the central control of Tahert, rather than a dogmatic dispute between Ibâḍism and the *da'wa* launched by Wâṣil b. 'Atâ'. The Nukkarites were not so easily disposed of, however, and their doctrine continued to be actively propagated. But it was not until the collapse of the Tahert Imamate (296/909) that they had their moment of glory under Abû Yazîd Makhlad b. Kaydâd, known as *ṣâhib al-ḥimâr*, whose revolt (332/943) seriously threatened the Fatimid empire.

#### Hârûn b. al-Yamân

However, returning to the origins of the schism: Shu'ayb's doctrine seems to have represented a synthesis of different tendencies, including those of Abû'l-Mu'arrij and 'Abdullâh b. 'Abd al-'Azîz, who had reasserted them after the death of al-Rabî'. In the Mashriq the main proponent of this major split in the Ibâḍi school seems to have become Hârûn b. al-Yamân, called in the letter of the *fuqahâ'* to al-Ṣalt, *Hârûn al-mukhâlif li'l-Muslimîn al-khârij min 'adl al-ḥaqq wa nûrihi!* It is clearly this later development that Bisyâni gives details of in his *exposé*.

The conflict apparently came to a head in the time of Abû Sufyân, but their exchanges show that matters had been brewing for some time, for Abû Sufyân, in declaring their *ra'y da'if*, states that al-Rabî', Wâ'il, and their *aṣḥâb* did not retire from this world until they had dissociated from

them, and specifically names 'Abdullâh b. Yazîd al-Sha'bi (= Fazâri), 'Abdullâh b. 'Abd al-'Azîz, Shu'ayb b. Ma'rûf, Khâtîm, and Sâlim. So, the *Bayân al-Shar'* (Book iii) comments, we dissociate whomever al-Rabî' dissociates from. Even so, Abû'l-Mu'arrij and 'Abdullâh b. 'Abd al-'Azîz were important pupils of Abû 'Ubayda and the *Mudawwana*, (p.232) which records principally the transmissions of seven of Abû 'Ubayda's pupils, citing them extensively. Al-Sâlimi in his exposé of this work says that although these two were not in a state of *walâya* they are acceptable for *fiqh* and *isnâds* (*sic*). Furthermore, Abû 'l-Mu'arrij came to Oman, where he started to come back round to the orthodox line and, as we have seen, was sent back to Yemen to bring his followers there back into the fold. A similar absolution appears in the Maghrib, where al-Wisyâni stated: 'The doctrine (*qawl*) of al-Rabî' is more balanced and wiser, but Ibn 'Abd al-'Azîz's has been accepted by most of the people.'<sup>56</sup>

However, what was essentially at issue by Abû Sufyân's time was the current form of Murji'ism, although other issues, like the vision of God, were also involved, as too the idea that one should not pray behind tyrants. Essentially Hârûn had a highly nuanced attitude to *walâya* and *barâ'a*, and if Abû Sufyân is to be believed, only accorded *kuf'r* status to those committing disobedience deserving *hadd* punishment in this world and hell in the next. In other words, he essentially recognized a 'middle way' for sins the Ibâdis firmly considered to be major, the *manzila bayn al-manzilatayn* which his predecessor Wâ'il b. Ayyûb in his *Sîra* had so roundly condemned.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, Hârûn blurred the strict interpretations of religious observances by the use of the word piety, *taqwâ*.<sup>58</sup> So, if I understand 'Awtabi aright,<sup>59</sup> he also propounded that 'our hearts became the better for having to learnt to distinguish between right and wrong ...', in other words, an empirical personal reflection rather than revealed Truth. The main focus of debate, however, was indecision, *shâkk*, and suspended judgement, *wuqûf*. *Shakk* had always been associated with the notion of *irjâ'*,<sup>60</sup> and we shall be discussing *wuqûf* more fully at a later stage: but it is clear that Hârûn's concept is that of Wâsil's, the Mu'tazili equivalent of the Murji'ite doctrine of *irjâ'*.<sup>61</sup> This perhaps explains why al-Bisyâni says that while they recognize 'Ali, 'Uthmân, ʿTalḥa, al-Zubayr were *kuffâr mushrikûn*, they still went to heaven! And in this connection it is worth noting that they quote *hadîth*.

Early Murji'ite doctrine had always been a serious threat to the Ibâdis, because dogmatically they suspended judgement over the fate of the sinner in the afterlife, although not necessarily condoning the major sinner, and they suspended judgement over the first *fitna* and extended that principle to subsequent ones. Their approach was based on the view (p.233) that one can only testify to what one had actually seen with one's own eyes ('*âyana*, cf. autopsy) and that one is entitled to use *irjâ'* where there is dispute over matters 'from which we were absent' (*ghâba 'anna*). That ran totally counter to the Ibâdi view about 'Uthmân and 'Ali (fundamental to all the Khawârij, as Shahrastâni states), and they had been roundly condemned by Sâlim b. Dhakwân, who argued (§98) that those who took part in the first and second *fitnas* must therefore have been guilty of *kuf'r* for having taking sides in what they had not seen. Furthermore, he implies (§91) that the Murji'ites were not relying on fundamental Islamic criteria (*awliyâ*), but rather their own non-Islamic *ra'y*, sidestepping the whole notion of *shahâda*.<sup>62</sup>

But equally they represented a political threat. The early Murji'ites had very much been activists and had participated in both Ibn al-Ash'ath's rebellion and that of Yazîd b. al-Muhallab, and

---

themselves raised revolts in Khurâsân,<sup>63</sup> all touching domains where the Ibâḍis were themselves trying to develop influence. However, as their philosophy concerning the past took hold, the later Murji'ites effectively became quietists, so that towards the end of the Umayyad to early 'Abbasid period they were failing to condemn the existing corrupt regime. Once again, they were effectively using the *manzila bayn al-manzilatayn* approach, which went to the extreme with the Dahriyya disengaging from affairs that did not directly concern them.<sup>64</sup> Such a pacific approach, which was gaining ground just at the period that when the Ibâḍis were asserting loud and clear that true faith was about words and deeds, was a direct challenge. And now the Murji'ites were establishing their school in Sohar along with the Qadariyya and making inroads in Oman (Chapter 9). Clearly, too, Hârûn's *taqwâ* approach implied the Murji'ite attitude that piety was an adequate expression of Islamic duty.

Here, in other words, Hârûn was propagating a real heresy with the most serious political overtones, borrowing from dogma the Ibâḍis had always strenuously rejected, and so the dispute had to be seriously repudiated.<sup>65</sup> Abû Sufyân vigorously rebuts Hârûn's division of sin into *makfira kabîra* and forgivable minor failings (*ṣaghîra maghfûra*) and rejects his examples of suspending judgements over persons whom earlier generations of the right-guided had accorded *walâya* or *barâ'a*, as for example 'Â'isha, and of deliberately confusing correct precedents of suspending judgement as exemplified by the Prophet and 'Umar al-Khaṭṭâb. Hârûn's *wuqûf* was simply *shakk*, and the *shâkk* Abû 'Ubayda had clearly stated (p.234) was damned. What was being raised was not doubt (what became termed *shakk al-su'âl*) but indecision, suspending judgement in what has been or can be firmly decided on proper Islamic criteria. Which is why Abû 'Ubayda adds that the person raising the issue may be excused, since it was not the question that was irresponsible, but the solution of deferring a decision when the facts to decide were there to see, or had already been decided by previous generations. That, too, is why Abû Sufyân goes on to cite al-Rabî', who discussed with his teacher the case of two men who had accepted the *da'wa* but continued to disagree with him over 'Uthmân and 'Ali: 'If they do not accept what I have learnt then they are repudiated (*khaza'*) by me and I dissociate from them: so they are not Muslims', and by extension are condemned in the afterlife as having refused the properly exposed *da'wa*. He could also have cited Hâjib, who also has an important discussion about *wuqûf*. If there is doubt (*shibha*) about what someone has done one passes from *walâya* to *wuqûf* and only moves to *barâ'a* when it is clear that he has disputing *al-ḥaqq al-ma'rûf fî Kitâb Allâh wa sunnat nabiyyhi wa âthâr al-ṣâlihîn*, who he defines as *al-â'imma wa'l-'ulamâ'*. Similarly, *wuqûf* is permitted when an outcome may have produced more good than bad: God will judge. But, Hâjib emphasizes, it is not an individual decision, but a collective one based on these criteria.

Hârûn was also threatening the Muslim community, according to Abû Sufyân, over the communal obligation of the Friday prayer and that the individual could fulfil the prayer duty by reading the Qur'ân. This ran totally counter to the Muslim community tradition, and he cites how Jâbir prayed behind tyrants and how the leading (proto-) Ibâ'is went together to the Basran Friday mosque in the heat of Ramadan.

Thus the Shukkâk and Murji'a came high in the degrees of disbelief (*darajât al-shirk/kufr*) in the later Ibâḍi heresiography. Nevertheless, Hârûn's views seem to have made inroads in Yemen,

where also some (the *Ṭurayfiyya*) had already broken away from Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq, and as already explained, al-Fazâri and his school had disputed the 'orthodox' line. How far Hârûn's views coincided with those of the Shu'aybiyya-Nukkaritre school, on the other hand, is not clear. But there was a common dimension to both that went back at least to al-Rabî's time.

But for the moment we can leave these debates and simply note that in the hotbed of intellectual thought that characterized Basra, all sorts of notions were challenging and influencing Ibâḍi theology and dogma, with three principal and overlapping groups of ideology involved: Murji'ism, with its notion of *shakk*; Mu'tazilism, with its *manzila bayn al-manzilatayn* and notions of what is good comes from God and bad from man; and Qadarism, highlighting the debate concerning free will. These three continued to represent the chief challenges to the *da'wa*, as is made clear in a letter appointing the Wali of Rustâq in the Imam al-Ṣalt's time: 'Make **(p.235)** apparent to the *ahl al-khilâf*, the proper Muslim *qawl*; and stamp down the views of the Qadariyya, Mu'tazila, Khawârij [note how the term designates Khâriji extremism], and Murji'a, and any other view that contradicts the *ahlal-da'wa*: and advise me of any such trouble.'<sup>66</sup> But for the moment all we need note is that the Ibâḍis were generally opting for the conservative approach of what became Orthodox Sunni Islam, albeit retaining elements of Mu'tazili influence.

What matters now is to return to the subject of activation and propagation of the movement.

#### The Hajj (*Hajj*)

One feature that has not been sufficiently emphasized in the history of propagating Ibâḍism is the role of the Hajj in maintaining contact between the different communities, particularly between the Mashriqis and Maghribis, who lived at the two ends of the Muslim empire and were not linked by common tribal or merchant networks. Indeed, it is an aspect in the spread of Islamic political movements in general that has largely been ignored, for to go on the Hajj was a fundamental right as well as a duty of the Muslims, and no government ever dared forbid it, despite the problem of keeping tabs on those attending. True, the Muslims went by delegations from different places, and we see the particular case of 'Abd al-Malik forbidding the Syrians from making the Hajj after Ibn al-Zubayr took Mecca, but that may be attributed to the fact that it was in 'rebel' hands. There may also have been some control of individuals, as witness the refusal by Hajjaj's governor in Oman to allow Mâlik to *hajj* a second time (see Chapter 6), but that again is probably because he was known as an opponent of the regime, and exceptional.

Abû Sa'îd al-Kudami points out that the early Muslims forced themselves to go in order to keep in touch, to meet Abû Bakr and 'Umar, and to meet up with the members of the *da'wa* in the various *amṣâr*. Abû Sufyân, in his account of the early Ibâḍis, emphasizes how Jâbir b. Zayd went every year, which not only meant he made contact with those at Mecca and Madina but also got to know those on the Basran contingent. Perhaps it was in this way that he managed to feel out the likes of 'Abd al-Malik b. al-Muhallab. It also becomes clear from this account that once the movement was activating, the Basran leaders exploited their right to the full in order to foster their objectives. Not only was it through the Hajj that the Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq uprising was organized, but it was as a pilgrim that Ḥâjib al-Ṭâ'iy was subsequently able to sort out the dispute amongst the Hadramis concerning their rump Imamate. It was as a result **(p.236)** of going on the Pilgrimage from Iraq that the Rustamid family,<sup>67</sup> of supposed Sasanid royal descent, arrived in



the Maghrib. While at or near Mecca 'Abd al-Raḥmân b. Rustam b. Bahram's father died, and his widow married a pilgrim from Qayrawân, taking her young son with them. There he seems to have been attracted by Ibâḍi doctrine and subsequently (135/752) went back to Basra to study under Abû 'Ubayda, returning five years later as one of the five missionaries (*ḥamalât al- 'ilm*), finally settling at Tahert to found the first full Imamate.

There are many other examples of how members of the Basran community went on the Hajj. Abû 'Ubayda al-Ṣaghîr, al-Faḍl b. al-Jundab, 'Ali al-Ḥaḍrami, and Wâ'il (al-Ḥaḍrami) met together in a mosque at Mecca when Abû Ja'far (Manṣûr) died, dhû'l-Ḥijja 158/775.<sup>68</sup> Abû 'Ubayda deputized al-Rabî' to act for him in the *mawsim* when he was too ill to go, while al-Naẓr b. Maymûn tried to give al-Rabî' 40 dinars to enable him to go.<sup>69</sup> The disputing parties, 'Abd al-Wahhâb and Ibn Fendin, sent two envoys to Mecca to find al-Rabî' and his entourage to discuss the problem of 'Abd al-Wahhâb's succession; Abû Sufyân was in Mecca with his son Abû 'Abdullâh when news of the 'Abbasid defeat and capture of 'Isâ b. Jafar in Oman arrived (Chapter 8).<sup>70</sup> The Rustamid Abû'l-Yaqzan went on the Hajj to try and unite the eastern 'Khawârij' to take power in Baghdad, or so it was claimed,<sup>71</sup> while the Jabal Nafûsan leader, 'Amrûs b. Fath (d. 283/896), met (Abû 'Abdullâh) Muḥammad b. Maḥbûb in his *majlis* at Mecca.<sup>72</sup> The ceremony gave the occasion to exchange books and discuss theological views.<sup>73</sup> So Abû Ya'qub Yûsuf b. Ibrâhîm al-Warjlâni asked Aḥmad al-Ḥaḍrami what his people thought about the Creation of the Qur'ân issue while on the Hajj<sup>74</sup> (which incidentally indicates both that this debate was not entirely resolved and that a Hadrami Ibâḍi community still existed in the 6/12<sup>th</sup> century).

But there are also hints that there was careful organization by the Ibâḍis. A recognition gesture was made under the Mîzâb (*gouttière*) when circulating the Ka'ba because it was there that Abû Bilâl was accorded a sign of God's favour. Dr Amat, writing shortly after the French occupation of the Mzab in 1882, says if a Mozabite cannot go on the Hajj then he should pay someone to go in his place, and mentions that one of the peculiarities of the Pilgrimage is to kneel a fifth (**p. 237**) time 'sous la gouttière mizab en souvenir d'Abou-Bilâl'.<sup>75</sup> Shammâkhi (p. 102) makes it clear that the Ibâḍis travelled together on the Pilgrimage, but the most interesting account comes from Ibn Sallâm, who gathered quite an amount of his material from reports of those that had done the Hajj.<sup>76</sup> Writing of the various regions where Ibâḍis were found, he details some prominent Meccans, but also selects two Omanis, Abû Marwân al-'Abbâs b. al-Waḍḍâḥ<sup>77</sup> and Sufyân b. Maḥbûb al-Kindi (*sic*), who lived in Mecca with 150 of 'our *aṣḥâb*', twenty-five of whom were Omanis, commenting that his grandfather (Raḥîl/Ruḥayl?) was a pupil of Abû 'Ubayda. During the Pilgrimage he erected tents for three days at Minâ so that the Omani pilgrims would congregate at Muḍârib Maḥbûb in the days of *tashrîq* after Yawm al-Aḍḥâ: 'I was told this by a friend of Abû Ḥammâd al-Nafûsi, a learned man who met the Omani pilgrims and their '*ulamâ*' during the visit to Minâ, staying in those tents', he adds. The personalities in this report are a bit confused, but there is little doubt that the main person described is a member of the Ruḥayl, seemingly Maḥbûb's (elder?) son Sufyân, of whom otherwise we know little, unlike his brother Abû 'Abdullâh Muḥammad (see Chapter 9). That he is described as a Kindi is perhaps not surprising in view of the fact that the Kinda had been to the fore in establishing the first ever Ibâḍi Imamate. Also of interest is the fact that the family had a representative settled in Mecca, for, as we shall see, the Ruḥayl were of non-Omani origin and claim Qurashi descent, the only

family in Oman to do so. The majority of the other Meccan Ibâḍis were probably Khuzâ'a, the clan which had been supporters of Abû Ḥamza Mukhtâr b. 'Awf's coup.

But all this shows that the Hajj was of primary importance, not only for keeping contact between widely dispersed Ibâḍi groups, but also for propagating the movement and settling its disputes.

*Missionary activity: the Maghrib*<sup>78</sup>

Success came more rapidly in the Maghrib than the Mashriq, where, in Oman, the Ibâḍis had to establish themselves in what was effectively a tribal civil war as a result of the Julandâ feud. In North Africa the **(p.238)** situation was much clearer-cut, Berber versus Arab, invader against invader, oppressed against oppressor.

It is here that we see the role of Abû 'Ubayda in Basra emerging most clearly. Following the setbacks in Tripolitania, a group of Maghribis came to Basra and a new wave of five missionaries, all taught by Abû 'Ubayda in secret according to Abû Zakariyyâ', were sent to the Maghrib to set up the true Ibâḍi state in Tripolitania. Four were from those who had come from the Maghrib to study with him; three of these, 'Aşîn al-Sadrâti [Sadrât], Isma'îl b. Darrar from Ghadamès, and Abû Dâwûd al-Qibli [Qibilli of Nafzâwa],<sup>79</sup> were from Tripolitania and its western confines, as too a Nafûsan, Ibn Maghtîr, who perhaps was slightly later, for he was still alive in 196/811-12. Although Abû 'Ubayda gently mocked Ibn Darrar, who had asked him to clarify some 300 points of law, about whether his ambition was to become a qadi, it is indicative of the authority Abû 'Ubayda had established as a jurist. The fourth was 'Abd al-Raḥmân b. Rustam, the future founder of the Rustamid Imamate. The fifth was Abû'l-Khaṭṭâb 'Abd al-A'lâ b. al-Samḥ al-Ma'âfiri al-Ḥimyari, a Yemeni, who was clearly sent precisely because he had no local interests and perhaps had known the Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq Imamate (although that is pure speculation).

When this Maghribi missionary contingent left Basra they asked Abû 'Ubayda who should be placed in charge should they be successful. His reply was to choose one of themselves, should any local leader show signs of having converted to further political ambitions, and if he refused he should be killed (i.e. the Imamate was an absolute obligation). Furthermore, he clearly indicated preference for Abû'l-Khaṭṭâb, since he was the only non-Maghribi. Nevertheless, following initial successes, they first seem to have offered the leadership to 'Abd al-Raḥmân, but he made excuses and it was Abû'l-Khaṭṭâb who was raised to the Imamate in 140/757-8. It was now that a conflict with the Şufriyya developed. In the previous year Qayrawân had fallen to the Warfajjûma, who had exacted a bloody revenge on the Arabs. In turn, the Ibâḍis took Qayrawân (141/758), where Abû'l-Khaṭṭâb appointed 'Abd al-Raḥmân as governor. However, as Lewinstein points out, the bloodbath had little to do with Şufri doctrine; rather it was an expression of the rancour of this particular Berber tribal grouping at its past treatment. Be that as it may, under the banner of *lâ ḥukm illâ lillâh wa lâ ṭa'a illâ ṭa'at Abi'l-Khaṭṭâb*, the Hawwâra and Nafûsa made their Imam master of Ifrîqiya, establishing **(p.239)** him in Tripoli. But his success coincided with the consolidation of 'Abbasid power under Muḥammad b. Ash'ath al-Khuzâ'i, who smashed Abû'l-Khaṭṭâb's forces in 144/761. 'Abd al-Raḥmân thereupon moved westwards with Nafûsan and Ifrîqiya groups and founded new Tahert (present-day Tagdemt, 40 km away from old Tahert), while Abû Qurra al-Yafrâni al-Şufri similarly moved with Ifrânid and other mainly Zanâta tribes to bring the whole of central Maghrib under his authority, declaring himself 'Caliph' of Tlemcen, before returning to advance on Ifrîqiya.

The two now made common cause and the Ibâḍis under 'Abd al-Raḥmân and Abû Hâtim al-Malzûzi recaptured Qayrawân and laid siege (154/771) to Ṭubna in the Zâb. But the Şufri—Ibâḍi confederation soon broke up, whether due to treason or dissidence matters little, and 'Abbasid power was re-established. 'Abd al-Raḥmân retreated back to Tahert and the Şufris to Sijilmâsa, the centre they had founded in the present-day region of Tafilalt (on the model of Abû Bilâl's *khurûj* with forty adherents), where they converted the Miknassa to Islam. This gave them a hold over the commerce and gold trade between the Soudan (*Bilâd al-Sudân*) and the Maghrib,<sup>80</sup> and under the leadership of the Midrâr, the Şufri Imams furthered these links with Awdaghosht (the place of the famous 'cheque' for 42,000 dinars) and the kingdom of Ghana. In the meantime, Abû Hâtim soldiered on in Tripolitania until an army from Egypt under Yazîd b. Hâtim b. Qabîşa b. al-Muhallab utterly defeated him, leaving the Imam and reportedly 30,000 of his followers on the battlefield (155/772). It is interesting that it was this Muhallabid, a man of the highest qualities, who brought to an end the Tripolitanian Imamate, pacifying Ifrîqiya during his time as governor (155-71/772-88). He was succeeded by his brother Rawḥ (171-4/788-91), who had been sent from Baghdad to prevent a dynastic succession (Yazîd's son Dâwûd, had been designated by his father), and he in turn was followed by Naşr b. Ḥabîb al-Muhallabi (174-7/791-3), who had commanded his *shurṭa* in Ifrîqiya and Egypt and who took up his post just as Qabîşa b. Rawḥ was being enthroned. As a result of family intrigues and general anarchy following al-Faḍl b. Rawḥ's appointment, Muhallabid authority was terminated about 184/800. Now it was Ibrâhîm b. al-Aghlab (of Tamîmi origins), founder of the Aghlabid dynasty, who set about bringing Ifrîqiya back under control; once again fighting began with the Ibâḍis, whose stronghold in the region remained in the Jabal Nafûsa, the upland region behind the coastal plain.

In the meantime 'Abd al-Raḥmân was elected Imam, probably around 161/778, partly because of his worthy record and partly because he led no particular faction. A Basran delegation was dispatched to visit Tahert (**p.240**) and found the new Imam working on his house, an eminently humble occupation, and he was duly recognized. With the strong support of the Nafûsans, he actively expanded his authority on his eastern flank, albeit pursuing a policy of appeasement with his 'Abbasid neighbours in Qayrawân, the 'Alid Idrisids in Fès, and the Şufri Midrarids in Sijilmâsa, marrying his daughter to the Şufri Imam's son. Under 'Abd al-Raḥmân and then his son 'Abd al-Wahhâb the old disputes between the Şufris, Waşiliyya (Mu'tazila), and Ibâḍis largely disappeared and only really opened up again when the Imamate became blatantly hereditary and factionalism developed. 'Abd al-Raḥmân died probably in 168, but possibly 171/788, and at that point we may leave the Ibâḍi Imamate of Tahert and return to the Mashriq.

Notes:

(1) For his Imamate see *Tuḥfa*, i. 88-98. Anon. A and Ibn Maddâd MS *Sîra* 271v say it lasted just over two years, 131-3 AH. That would more or less accord with the events described by Ṭabari, iii. 78-9 under 134. Lewicki's (1959) dates of 135-7, even as modified to 132-4 in his *EI2* article (*al-Ibâḍiyya*), seem too late.

(2) Lewicki 1971.

(3) 'Awtabi, AB204v.

(4) *Jâmi' Ibn Ja'far*.

(5) *Muṣannaf*, x. §11 ff.

(6) Cf. Yâqût, *Udabâ'* vi. 492-3.

(7) Cf. *inter alia* al-Bisyâni on the Imamate (Kâshif, ii. 186): *Muṣannaf*, x. §25.

(8) According to Al-Salmi. *QS* viii. 304 and *KD inter alia* give his *nisba* as Khurâsâni. It should, of course, be remembered that many Khurâsânis were of Omani origin.

(9) He features in Munîr's list of 17 exemplars from the period. It is also worth noting that Munîr's son, al-Mu allâ, was a prominent 'âlim (MS 2424).

(10) For details see Ṭabari, iii. 78-9.

(11) In *EI2*, 'Ikrima'. Rebstock quotes Bakri as before 104/722-3 and an unknown source between 104 and 108 (722 and 727) after returning to Madina.

(12) Cf. Talbi 1966; Lewinstein *EI2*, 'Ṣufriyya'.

(13) Rebstock 1983: 13.

(14) Al-Salmi, *Thesis*, no. xxvi and accompanying fn.

(15) *KD* 400-1.

(16) *Sîra* of Abû'l-Mu'thir to Ibn Ja'far.

(17) Cf. *EI2*, 'Fiqh' (Goldziher-Schacht) and Juynboll 1983: ch. 1.

(18) Al-Salmi, *Thesis*, no. xxiii.

(19) For lists of the early missionaries and influential figures in Khurâsân, see Al-Salmi, *Thesis*, 207.

(20) In a quote from a work by 'Abû 'Abdullah's son Bashîr (*K. al-Taqyîd*, 277) we see him posing the question of whether *walâya* and *barâ'a* were of the *ṣifât al-fi'l* or *ṣifât al-dhât*; the answer was disputed.

(21) *QS* viii. 305.

(22) *Thesis*, ch. 4: specific reference here is to §§ 5 and 7.

(23) Al Barrâdi (*Jawâhir*) also has a long section on Ibn Mas'ûd's criticism of 'Uthmân at Kûfa and how he led the opposition to him before coming to Madina.

(24) Francesca 2005: 249, quoting Ennami on Abû 'Ubayda's *Masâ'il*.

(25) Ṭallây edn. i. 47; note Darjîni gives Ibn Mas'ûd the customary *raḥmahu Allâh* for those the Ibâdis recognize.

(26) 1991-7: 2.2.5.3.

(27) It is worth pointing out in this connection Jesus's reply to Pontius Pilate 'Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above ... And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him ...' (John 19: 11-12).

(28) Cf. Van Ess in *EI2*, 'Qadariyya'.

(29) Al-Salmi, Thesis, no. xviii.

(30) *Kâshif* edn. ii. 51. There is no reason to presume that he wrote his *Sîra* as the 'successor' to al-Rabi'. He was prominent much earlier, and it is interesting to note that he is described as a *faqîh* in the title.

(31) Cf. Cuperly 1984: 28 and 260 ff.

(32) Ennami, based on Jiṭali, quoted Cook 1981: 138-9.

(33) Cf. *inter alia* *EI2*, arts. 'Ilm al-Kalâm; al-Ḥaḍâ wa'l-Kadar; Mu'tazila.

(34) 2009*b* for details.

(35) Cf. Wolfson 1976: 729.

(36) *Ibid.* 633 ff.

(37) Cf. *inter alia* his biography by van Ess in *EI2*.

(38) Cf. *EI2*, Qadariyya (van Ess) and in particular his article in *Studia Islamica*, 31 (1970), cited therein.

(39) Daghfous 1995: ii. 632.

(40) There are several relatively modern accounts of such divergences, e.g. Nâsir b. Abi Nabhân al-Kharûṣi's *Sîra*, the poem translated and commented by Smogorzewski for differences with the Mâlikis, but the fullest and most interesting account is that in Sulaymân al-Bârûni's *Mukhtaṣar*.

(41) This has remained an ongoing debate (cf. Muḥammad b. 'Abdullâh al-Khalîli's correspondence with Muḥammad b. Yûsuf Aṭfayyish concerning the 'vision of God'), and a divergence with the Sunnis which almost caused a diplomatic incident when the Omani 'Grand Mufti' visited his opposite number in Saudi Arabia.

(42) Cf. for example Wâ'il b. Ayyûb's *Sîra* and Hârûn's reply concerning Abû Sufyân's *exposé* to the Omanis of his 'heresy'.

(43) *Ḍiyâ'*, iii. 151; cf. also al-Bisyâni, *Sîra* (*Kâshif* edn. ii. 139-40).

- (44) See notably Shammâkhi, 104-5, Darjîni, ii. 290, letter of al-Sâlimi in introduction to vol. ii of the *Mudawwana*. Certainly Abû'l-Mu'arrîj was a leading source for Abû 'Ubayda's teaching as recorded in that work.
- (45) al-Bisyâni, *Sîra ... fî Hafṣ b. Râshid* (Kâshif edn. ii. 25); Al-Salmi 2009b: 507-8.
- (46) Cf. Wilkinson 1969: ch. 4, n. 41; Al-Salmi 2009b: 478-9.
- (47) Madelung 1979: 127.
- (48) Cf. Cuperly 1984 re the *Uṣûl al-Dîn* of the Nafûsan Tibghûrîn (6/12<sup>th</sup> cent.), which apparently follows the Mashriqi Ibâḍis.
- (49) Ennami 1971: 169.
- (50) Cf. *inter alia* Lewicki, *EI2*, Nukkâr.
- (51) For a reconstruction of his life, works, and theology from what survives, see Madelung's introduction (1985) to the Zaydi Imam Aḥmad b. Nâṣir's *radd* to al-Fazâri's own *radd 'alâ 'l-qadariyya*.
- (52) The essential account is in *Ta'rîkh Abi Zakariyyâ'* (1979 edn.), 56 ff., but Darjîni's recension (Ṭallây edn. i. 44 ff), written a couple of centuries later, is more readable.
- (53) By his time the concept of *ijmâ'* (see Chs. 12 and 14) had replaced it: cf., for example, al-Jannâwuni (*K. al Waḍ*) that the Qur'ân, Sunna, and *Ijmâ'* are the three channels (*majârî*).
- (54) One is specified, Abû Ghassân Makhlid b. Mu'arrîd (Darjîni; slight variant in Abû Zakariyyâ'); a Khurâsâni (van Ess 1991-7: ii. 602), he is one of the sources for the *Mudawwana*.
- (55) Ibn Sallâm (p. 110), who was told the story by Naffâth b. Naṣr al-Nafûsi. Is this the same man who rebelled against the Rustamids and reputedly destroyed the *Diwân* of Jâbir b. Zayd (see Ch. 14)?
- (56) Quoted Francesca 2003: 273 (from Cracow MS of his *K. al-Siyar*).
- (57) See also discussion of Hârûn's thesis in *K. al-Taqyîd*, 133.
- (58) This may be in accordance with Murji'ite ideas of faith excluding works; cf. Madelung 1982.
- (59) *Ḍiyâiii*. 151: cf. also al-Bisyâni on the Shu'aybiyya (Kâshif edn. ii. 139-40).
- (60) Cf. Sâlim b. Dhakwân under the Murji'ites, §104, l. 779.
- (61) Cf. Zimmermann 1991.
- (62) See also C&Z's translation (App. 5) of the anonymous *radd 'alâ ahl al-shakk*, an item of the Hinds Xerox.

(63) Cf. C&Z, ch. 6.

(64) Cook 1981: ch. 7.

(65) Cf. Abû Sufyân's letters to the Omanis and Hadramis and Hârûn's to the Omani Imam; also Wilkinson 1987: 164-6.

(66) Loose translation; for the actual text see *Tuḥfa*, i. 192.

(67) The main references (Ibn Ṣaghîr, Abû Zakariyyâ', etc.) may be found in various *EI2* articles by Talbi and Lewicki (Rustamids, Ḳayrawân, etc.).

(68) Darjîni, ii. 254; Shammâkhi, 94.

(69) Darjîni, ii. 245; Shammâkhi, 103.

(70) *Tuḥfa*, i. 119.

(71) Zerouki, 1975: 87 (basically ex-Ibn Ṣaghîr).

(72) Darjîni, ii. 320-5.

(73) e.g. Barrâdi catalogue (1974 edn.), item 19; Ennami *Thesis*, 234.

(74) Ennami 1971: 234.

(75) Shammâkhi, 67; Amat 1888: 160; Deny 1961 may also be relevant.

(76) Shammâkhi, 102; Ibn Sallâm, 109.

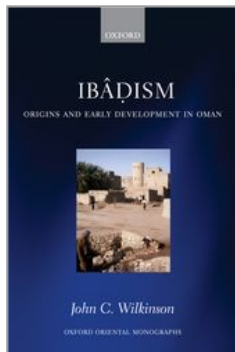
(77) Abû Marwân al-'Abbâs b. al-Waḍḍâḥ calls to mind the Abû Marwân who was Muhannâ's Wali of Sohar and his assistant Ziyâd b. al-Waḍḍâḥ. More likely is Abû Marwân Sulaymân b. Muḥammad b. Ḥabîb of the Imam Ghassân's time (*Tuḥfa*, i. 130), but my best guess is Abû Ziyâd Waḍḍâḥ b. 'Uḳba or his son Ziyâd b. Waḍḍâḥ, prominent 'ulamâ' of Muhannâ's time.

(78) The general background is essentially a synthesis of sources already quoted.

(79) He is not included amongst the *ḥamalât al-'ilm*, and since he was still alive at such a late date (cf. Lewicki in *EI2*, Ibâḍiyya) he was either very young or a later-comer. In any case, this number of five is not sacrosanct: there is some confusion about the number of missionaries in Oman also.

(80) Zerouki 1975.

University Press Scholarship Online  
Oxford Scholarship Online



## Ibâdism: Origins and Early Development in Oman

John C. Wilkinson

Print publication date: 2010

Print ISBN-13: 9780199588268

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2011

DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.001.0001

### The Establishment of the Imamate in Oman

John C. Wilkinson

DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.003.0008

#### [-] Abstract and Keywords

This chapter explains how the tribal rivalry of the Julandâ feud was exploited by the Ibâdî missionaries to win victory at the battle of Majâza (177/793) and establish the Imamate. It analyses the basic balance of power between various potential factions and how and why the first main Imams were selected, along with a brief description of their rule. The chapter ends with Omani overseas expansion, showing how an Omani navy was organized, the piratical menace of the *bawârij* who had menaced Indian Ocean trade since the collapse of Sasanid power were dealt with, and Sohar became a major entrepôt.

*Keywords:* Julandâ feud, Ibâdî missionaries, Imamate, Oman, Imams, Omani navy, Sohar, Majâza

In Oman matters had been far less successful. After the collapse of the Julandâ Imamate two prominent leaders escaped, Khalaf b. Ziyâd al-Baḥrani<sup>1</sup> and Shabîb b. 'Aṭiyya. The former had been absent from the battle because of illness, and took refuge in Izki, where Shabîb, who acquired a certain following, may have joined him. Shabîb's piety was not in question and he has left a long and vigorous *sîra*, basically dealing with the politico-theological disputes of the period (Murji'ites, Azâriqa, as well as those who maintain that quietism and not *shirâ'* was the right course).<sup>2</sup> I have already quoted it in connection with *ḥadîth* through which such dissidents justified their position (*li kull muḥdatha bid' a*). He also rejected the term 'Khawârij', reversing the argument: it was Mu'âwiya, 'Amr b. al-'Âṣ, and the people of Shâm who *kharajû min ummat Muḥammad*, and the greatest offenders against Islam were Quraysh and those who supported them. This voiced the extreme resentment, echoed in one of Abû Ḥamza's sermons at Madina, at the cruel, vicious, and unjust rule of the Umayyads and Thaḳafis, and which continued with the establishment of 'Abbasid government, notably in Yemen where illegal taxes were imposed and



those who opposed them were massacred, man, woman, and child. From the time of Busr's raid down to Ma'n b. Zâ'ida's oppression, Quraysh had shown that the quality of mercy was not just strained, but totally unknown. However, I believe that this *sîra* was written before Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq and al-Julandâ, for, like Sâlim b. Dhakwân who must have been his quasi-contemporary, it seems unlikely that they could invoke activism without reference to these first attempts to set up Imamates.

Be that as it may, Shabîb became an important and controversial figure after al-Julandâ's death, and while not officially designated Imam, he did claim the authority to tax the villages as a *muhtasib* (*yajbi al-qurâ* (p.242) *ihtisâb*<sup>an</sup>). Conversely, he did nothing to protect them, disappearing from the scene whenever a 'Sultan' appeared, according to later reports from al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥawâri. As a result, Mûsâ b. Abi Jâbir (d. 181/797), who himself originated from Izki, discussed his case with al-Rabî' in Basra, who was of the opinion that it was a matter for those involved to choose whether they recognized (*wala*) his authority or not. Mûsâ and his close ally, Bashîr b. al-Mundhir, disagreed, so al-Rabî' disengaged, saying that was his opinion, but that Mûsâ and Bashîr were the leading '*ulamâ*' of their own country and should do what they thought best, a view Mûsâ made known when he got back. So it became a matter of *walâya* and *barâ'a*, with the main Omani Ibâḍis finally deciding to dissociate from Shabîb's supporters: Hâshim b. Ghaylân (Mûsâ's leading pupil) comments that Bashîr hated indecision (*kaff*).

This controversy is interesting from two other points of view. First, that Mûsâ and Bashîr were very much involved in affairs in Oman before the decisive Battle of Majâza in 177/793, which runs counter to the later general view that, with the exception of Muḥammad b. Mu'allâ, the missionaries came from Basra after the Ibâḍi *dawla* was set up. Second, that al-Rabî', whilst consulted, was by no means considered an 'Imam' of any sort, and that what went on in Oman was essentially the affair of the Omanis living there.

#### The Julandâ feud

But the dominant feature affecting Oman was the feud that had resulted from the Imam al-Julandâ executing, in the name of Ibâḍi justice, the leading members of the rival branch of his family who had resisted him. To make matters worse, he ordered the execution at Bahlâ of a group of rebels from the Sharqiyya whose life was forfeit according to the Ibâḍis, but whom his Wali at Ibrâ (Abû Şâlih al-Waḍḍâh) was inclined to pardon, although covering himself by saying that only the Imam could grant clemency (*amân*). The matter was referred to Abû 'Ubayda and Ḥâjib, and the latter ruled (that in such a case) there could be no *amân* with the Imam and none without him (in other words, Julandâ was responsible and should declare their lives forfeit). From now on there was a blood feud, exacerbated by a group of 'Khawârij' guests murdering 'Abd al-'Azîz al-Julandâni, which led the Julandâ demanding that Abû 'Ubayda and Ḥâjib should intervene, but they refused to get involved.

Nevertheless, the feud was essentially tribal. The overthrow of Julandâ rule in 177/793 resulted not from any great religious convictions but because of an oath of revenge taken against the Julandâ confederation by their tribal rivals in the north of the country. These tribal ramifications, however, extended right down the interior of Oman, notably to the central (p. 243) Jawf, where the Ibâḍis seemed to have entrenched communities in Izki, Manah, and Nizwâ

and, through alliances, beyond, into eastern Oman and the Sumâyil Gap. The one area apparently not affected was the Ghadaf (Rustâq area).

The complexities are demonstrated by the plundering of Nizwâ by the B. Hinâ, a decade or so (145/762) after the Imam al-Julandâ's overthrow by the Caliphate force that had been pursuing the Şufriyya. That the story is related as an isolated incident in all the histories indicates it was of importance, even though its significance seems to have been largely lost. In fact it is the key to understanding a great deal about what was going on and the situation that the Ibâḍis had to deal with to re-establish power. The story starts by explaining that the land had passed into the hands of 'tyrants' led by two Julandâ, Muhammad b. Zâ'ida and Râshid b. al-Nazr, descent of the Ja'far executed on the orders of the Imam al-Julandâ. 'Awtabi,<sup>3</sup> the primary source, recounts under the rubric of the B. Hinâ (Mâlik b. Fahm), that their shaikh, Ghassân b. Sa'd (read Sa'îd) of the Muḥârib clan,<sup>4</sup> plundered Nizwâ, which belonged to the B. Nâfi' and the B. Humaym, killing many. This angered the B. al-Ḥârith (Mâlik b. Fahm) of Ibrâ, so that Ziyâd b. Sa'îd al-Bakri al-'Abdi ('Abd al-Qays) joined the B. al-Ḥârith, led a party to 'Atîk where they lay in ambush for Ghassân between his *dâr* and that of Jannâḥ b. Sa'd, murdering him as he was returning from visiting a sick man of the B. Rabkha (B. Hinâ section). In revenge, an 'âmil of the Julandâ, Munâzil b. Khanbash al-'Âbiri al-Hinâ'i living at Naba' (in the Wadi Nâm<sup>5</sup>), made a surprise attack on nearby Ibrâ and killed forty people.

The B. Nâfi' were the clan (B. Sâma) of the Ibâḍi missionary Abû'l-Mundhir Bashîr b. al-Mundhir. The Humaym were Ma'n (Humaym b. 'Âmir al-Ma'ni, Mâlik b. Fahm) who had come under the influence of Ibâḍism while in Basra. A delegate to 'Umar II, Ḥattât b. Kâtib, was from the Humaym of Samad Nizwâ, while Abû Walîd Ḥâshim b. Ghaylân, sometimes designated a missionary, lived in the B. Humaym quarter of Sijâ (Sumâyil Gap).<sup>6</sup> A pupil of Mûsâ b. Abi Jâbir, and a contemporary of Abû 'Uthmân Sulaymân b. 'Uthmân of 'Aqr Nizwâ, they were the two prominent 'ulamâ' during the Imamates of Ghassân and his successor 'Abd al-Malik b. Ḥumayd, who earlier had led the Ibâḍis to victory at Majâza (see below), an event in which Ḥâshim had been involved in his youth.

**(p.244)** The B. Hinâ feud has already been partly explained. In the pre-Islamic split among the Mâlik b. Fahm the Hinâ, the leading clan, were strong supporters of the Salîma, whose main opponents were the Ma'n and the Ḥârith. When the Shanu'a Azd arrived, the Hinâ seem willingly to have handed over power to the Ma'wali family from which came the Julandâ, so when the Ibâḍi sympathizers Jannâḥ b. 'Abbâda al-Hinâ'i and his son Muḥammad were appointed 'Abbasid governors in Sohar, they were certainly not opposed to the choice of a Julandâ as Imam. But as a result of the feud the Hinâ took the old dynasty's side. Rather more puzzling is the place where they lived, 'Atîk. It immediately brings to mind the leading 'Imrân tribe, the key to the alliance with the B. Nâjiyya that linked the Yaman and Nizâr of Oman, and who were the dominant family of the Azd in Basra to whom the Muhallab family assimilated. The 'Atîk, on the other hand, play no part in the establishment of the Imamate, whilst their close association with the B. Nâjiyya suggests they were part of the Julandâ confederation and so allies with the B. Hinâ, whose own settlements were around the Jabal Kawr region (capital Sayfam, a name which occurs early on in Omani history). Originally I thought 'Atîk was an alternative name for all or part of Bahlâ (which later passed into the hands of the Nabâhina, themselves of 'Atîk origins), but now believe it designated the upstream settlements, in the

present-day Ḥamrâ area (including Kudam, then an important place), where they would have been neighbours of the Hinâ, and that this area of Hina—'Atîk control represented the main outpost of the Julandâ alliance in the Jawf.

Be that as it may, the B. Hinâ were the implacable enemies of the Ibâḍis and for long remained so, as the Julandâ feud continued to haunt the First Imamate. So after the Ibâḍi victory at Majâza, Ziyâd b. Sa'îd al-Bakri's son, acting in the name of the Imam Ibn Abi 'Affân, wreaked revenge for the events of 145/762. During the Imamate of Ghassân b. 'Abdullâh (192–207/808–23),<sup>7</sup> Râshid b. Shâdhân al-Hinâ'i, grandson of Ghassân b. Sa'îd, in turn led a band of B. Hinâ and other dissidents in the Sharq against the Ibâḍis before plundering Damâ, killing the Wali and his people, helped by Hâshim, brother of Ṣaqr b. Muḥammad b. Zâ'ida, the then Julandâ chief. Earlier the Imam (when at Damâ) had held Ṣaqr responsible for a violent act by his brother, and imprisoned him, but was more or less overruled by the leading 'âlim Sulaymân b. 'Uthmân, who sought appeasement. So when Hâshim joined the Hinâ'i leader's raiding party Ṣaqr was still under a sort of house arrest at Sumâyil and claimed his brother was ill at home with him. But when events proved otherwise, the Imam ordered the Wali Abû'l-Waḍḍâḥ, to bring Ṣaqr to Nizwâ, under **(p.245)** guard in case the *shurât* tried to kill him because of their oath of revenge against the Julandâ. To ensure his safety he sent a further escort accompanied by Mûsâ b. 'Ali (Mûsâ b. Abi Jâbir's grandson), but when the two groups met up at the Najd al-Siḥâma (in the Sumâyil Gap) neither could prevent the *shurât* from killing him (207/822–3). Abû'l-Ḥawâri comments that Mûsâ was afraid for his own life.

Once again the *shurât*, that is the tribal Ibâḍi forces who had been responsible earlier for killing the commander of the defeated, 'Abbasid force whilst a prisoner, had shown their disregard for the Ibâḍi authorities and pursued their vendetta against the Julandâ. The fact that the Imam did not condemn them led to the speculation that either he had secretly ordered the act, or considered it justified, or was too afraid to speak out. Similarly, in the earlier assassination Bashîr b. al-Mundhir condoned the 'Abbasid general's murder, even though it had not been authorized. Râshid b. Shâdhân al-Hinâ'i himself got off more lightly. He outran a party sent in pursuit, and by throwing himself on the mercy of the Fajḥ at Rustâq, obtained through them an *amân* for himself and the Muḥârib from the Fajḥi Imam. But as the *Bayân al-Shar'* says in justification of these events: 'all that was in the birth pangs of the Imamate and power was in the hands of its people.'

But we are getting ahead of our story.

### Majâza

Nothing much is recorded of what happened in the thirty or so years following the plundering-of-Nizwâ incident. There are hints in Munîr b. al-Nayyir's *Sîra* of disorders and raids from the sea, but it probably does not amount to anything more than the sort of undisciplined tribal rule that had characterized Oman since the Persians left, and the insecurity of the coast, subject to attacks by *bawârij* pirates from Sind and the Makrân. There was a sort of revolt against Râshid b. al-Naẓr al-Julandâni by Mûsâ b. Abi Jâbir and another 'âlim (either Muḥammad b. 'Abdullâh b. Jassâs or Hâshim b. Ghaylân), who backed a certain Ghassân b. 'Abd al-Malik. For reasons that will become apparent, I suspect that this Ghassân was a Yahmadi, but he was certainly not a recommendable figure and the *Bayân al-Shar'* uses the case to maintain the rather dubious

---

proposition that in dealing with tyrannical rulers (*jabâbira*) it is acceptable to accompany a bad man against a worse if it improves the lot of the true Muslims.

The success of the Ibâḍis against the Julandâ, however, came from a quite different direction. It was the young 'Abd al-Malik b. Ḥumayd of the B. 'Ali, a future Imam, who rallied the Muslims by making them take an oath against the Julandâs. In this connection it is worth noting that in the *K. al-Muḥârabâ* it is claimed by some *fuqahâ* that in a case like Râshid b. (p.246) al-Ḥazr al-Julandâni there is no requirement to issue a call to Islam before fighting, since they had already rejected it. Perhaps; but it was, nevertheless, a renewal of the feud rather than a reassertion of establishing the cause of Islam.

The B. 'Ali (b. Sawda) may be considered an independent Azd tribe, reputedly descended from the numerous progeny of 'Amr al-Muzayqiyâ' (which also included the 'Imran Azd). They lived in the general area where the Julandâ alliance was strong, probably in the mountain area behind Yanqul, where later they replaced the Ḥuddân as the dominant tribe in this important settlement. The first to join him were two Kindis, Muḥammad b. al-Mu'allâ, who is considered the first of the missionaries to live in Oman before the *dawla* was established, and another 'âlim, al-Aḥnash al-Faṣḥi, both from Faṣḥ (today Faṣḥ) in the 'Amq bowl in the Wadi Saḥtân. It is almost certain that they brought with them a contingent from the main Jabal Kinda area to the north. The Julandâ chief, Râshid b. al-Ḥazr (whose father had been executed by the Imam al-Julandâ), foreseeing trouble, was away raising forces amongst the Mahra country in the desert, so the Ibâḍi force moved out, probably via Manaḥ, to beyond Adam, and battle was joined at a place called Majâza,<sup>8</sup> in which many of Râshid's soldiers from the B. Najw (Nâjiyya) were killed, although he himself escaped and his son fled from Nizwâ.

It is from this date, the 23rd Ramaḍân 177 (December 793), according to al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥawâri, that the 'Muslim' *dawla* began and they started appointing *zakât* collectors.

'Wa kân dhâlika fî ayyâm ṣadri 'l-dawla wa quwwatuha bi ahlihi'

But it all still smacked more of tribal revenge than a new order based on the precepts of Ibâḍi Islam. Abû'l-Ḥawâri, from whom the *Bayan al-Shar'* drew this quotation, was in fact replying to the Hadramis over the reproaches that one of their leading Imams, Sulaymân b. 'Abd al-'Azîz,<sup>9</sup> had made concerning the Julandâ feud and that killing al-Ṣaqr b. Julandâ was considered licit. He also took up in the same *Sîra* the issue that they forbade *nabîdh* while the Khurâsânîs did not (see Chapter 12), but signally failed to respond to the accusation that the Omanis transferred the Imamate from one member of a clan to another, rather than to the best men (*afâḍil*).

(p.247) So, in pursuit of their feud, the victorious army pulverized (*nasafû*) Râshid's *dâr*. As a result, the Ḥuddâni shaikhs of Salût, who were very much involved in northern Oman politics, went to protest at nearby Bahlâ, where Bashîr b. al-Mundhir and his pupil Hâshim b. Ghaylân had assembled with other leading '*ulamâ*', indignantly complaining this was not the Muslim way. The usual argument ensued over the precedent set by the Prophet and the B. Naḍîr, and the act seems to have been condoned. It represents an interesting early brush between the Ḥuddân, who were the most northerly of the main Azd groupings settled in the mountains behind Sohar and rivals of the Yaḥmad, and the leading '*ulamâ*' from central Oman, and should be borne in mind for understanding events leading to the civil war a century later, when the B.

Sâma and Ḥuddâni Ibâḍi leaders made common cause and retreated to the north, where they made al-Ḥawâri b. 'Abdullâh al-Ḥuddâni al-Salûti Imam at Yanqul (see Chapter 11).

Following their victory, the leaders of the Ibâḍi forces reassembled at Manaḥ, from where they sent a party to bring Mûsâ b. Abi Jâbir, Bashîr and other '*ulamâ*' at Izki to join them. Mûsâ, who took charge of proceedings, was personally in favour of making Muḥammad b. al-Mu'allâ Imam, but was not prepared to hand full power over the *shurât* to him or anyone else at this stage.<sup>10</sup> So he placed the Kindi in charge of Sohar, saying there was plenty enough to do there, and similarly started distributing the other towns, aware that there were too many jostling for position.<sup>11</sup> He probably reserved Manaḥ and Izki for himself but gave the other main centres of the Jawf to Muḥammad b. 'Abdullâh b. Abi 'Affân al-Yaḥmadi.

It is interesting that Mûsâ wanted the Kindi as Imam. The Kinda were old allies of the Azd, notably certain Shanu'a groupings (which included the Yaḥmad, Ḥuddân, and Julandâ), and Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq had been a Kindi. As the leading '*âlim* who had joined the uprising that overthrew Julandâ rule, for the moment at least Muḥammad b. al-Mu'allâ certainly deserved the position. But Mûsâ's choice was probably more influenced by the fact that he would be more or less tribally neutral, *a fortiori* if he was of non-Omani Kindi origin.<sup>12</sup> Although the Kinda were very much Yamani, they were settled in the northernmost part of the mountains (see Map 3), whereas the main Ibâḍi support articulated around the central core of the country; so the choice of a Kindi as Imam would also have helped incorporate the north of the country into the new state. True, the two Sâmi missionaries, Mûsâ b. Abi Jâbir and Bashîr b. al-Mundhir, had some tribal as well as religious authority in the Jawf, but their main (p.248) potential tribal backing lay north of the Sirr, where the main mass of tribesmen, the B Nâjiyya, had been leading supporters of the Julandâ. So Mûsâ had to face up to the realities of the political situation and sent Muḥammad b. al-Mu'allâ to look after the official capital on the coast and placed a Yaḥmadi who had been brought from Iraq to run the campaigns in central Oman.

'After the Julandâ rule was brought to an end it transferred to the Yaḥmad'

Al-Sâlimi<sup>13</sup> has no hesitation in recognizing this fact of life, but he could have gone much further. The Yaḥmad clans not only controlled the First Imamate, but their internal rivalries lay at the root of the civil war, and they subsequently made their '*Rustâq*' dogma official in support of their claims to leadership in the Second Imamate. And if we look at the historical record we will see that twenty or more Imams came from the Yaḥmadi Kharûş families, including the two main ones of the twentieth century. Apologists may say that the Kharûş are the only clan in whom the Omanis can have confidence, but early history often belies them, though it must be added straightaway that the two most principled Imams of the First Imamate were both Kharûşis, al-Wârith b. Ka'b and al-Şalt b. Mâlik. But the behaviour of the B. Kharûş at Rawḍa, which effectively started off the civil war, shows that tribal '*aşabiyya* was not foreign to their position, and the reason they were elected in the first place was because they were Yaḥmad. Although the core of B. Kharûş territory was the Wadi bearing their name, with the two principle settlements of Istâl and Hijâr, they also then largely controlled al-Sawni (today al-'Awâbi) and a part at least of the Wadi Saḥtân around 'Amq: they were also closely allied to the Kalb Yaḥmad tribes and the B. Ghâfir. So albeit of lesser political importance than the Fajḥ,<sup>14</sup> who owned the great ex-Sasanid fort in the regional capital of Rustâq (Rustâq al-Yaḥmad as 'Awtabi calls it),

they were nevertheless an essential element in the Yaḥmad confederation, and the Ibâḍis needed the Yaḥmad.

Julandâ power had essentially been based on the north, where their centre was probably in the Ḥafit area,<sup>15</sup> but they had forts at Sohar, Nizwâ, and Sumâyil. But the one all-important area they did not control was the Ghadaf and the mountain bastion of the Jabal Yaḥmad. The Ibâḍis may have had a victory, but they had by no means dealt with the resistance; the Julandâ and their allies, notably the B. Hinâ, were still very **(p.249)** much a force in the land, and indeed the only Imams not to pursue the feud overtly were the two Kharûşis, the first and last fully recognized Imams of the 'Golden Age'.

Apart from Jâbir b. Zayd, the Yaḥmad had not played any central role in either Ibâḍi or Basran political affairs, although some individuals are mentioned. The Shanu'a Azd had been led in the Fârs campaign by a Ḥuddâni, whose family continued to be to the fore in Basra after they moved from Tawwaj, after which the paramount leadership of the Azd *khums* passed to the 'Atîk family that had led the 'Imrân Azd in the same campaign. Subsequently, in the later Umayyad and early 'Abbasid period, it was the B. Hinâ who feature as the main leaders in Iraq and Khurâsân. All were from the northern half of Oman and thus closely concerned by their relationship with the Julandâ who dominated there. None of these tribes was to play a significant role in establishing the Imamate, except the Ḥuddâni clan controlling Salût, then the centre of an area of great fertility downstream of Bahlâ which was so important that al-Muḡaddasi describes it as a large *madîna*. So while the Ḥuddâni shaikhs did rally to the B. Sâma '*ulamâ*' and joined the northern anti-Julandâ alliance put together by the B. 'Ali leader in the Sirr, it was a tenuous loyalty and their tribal enemies remained the Yaḥmad.

But with this exception, those clans that had been important earlier do not feature as supporters of the Imamate. The 'Atîk only re-emerge much later on in Oman history under the guise of the Nabâhina, and there is some evidence that they, along with the B. Nâjiyya and the B. Hinâ, had been active supporters of the Julandâ. So the setting up of the Imamate represented a major revolution, politically, tribally, as well as religiously. With the overthrow of the Julandâ order that had lasted some 250 years, most of the tribal groups that had dominated the politics of Oman and Basra in pre-Imamate times were eclipsed, and the scene shifted from the north of the country to the centre, where the Yaḥmad, whose fortune had essentially arisen through taking power in the Ghadaf, the core area of Sasanid Mazûn, now became the real force in the land.

#### Missionary activities

Further evidence of the tribal background comes from the Ibâḍi missionary activities which brought the '*ilm* from al-Rabî' in Basra. These, it should be noted, are quite distinct from the earlier wave sent to the Maghrib and were all Omani. There are several names mentioned, but the consensus is that there are four principal ones, although there is only full agreement over three of them. Muḡammad b. al-Mu'allâ al-Kindi has already been mentioned. That he came from Fash/Fashḥ is common ground, but we know little more. 'Awtabi thinks he was from the Sakûn, **(p.250)** but more puzzling is that 'Awtabi (whence presumably others) says he was the only one who was in Oman before the establishment of the Ibâḍi *dawla*, which implies that Bashîr and Mûsâ were not. Furthermore, in the *K. al-Diyâ'* (book III) he says there is some

uncertainty of whether he was in *walâya*.<sup>16</sup> Which seems rather extraordinary in the light of what we know of his life. There is no record of his death-date, but it is clear that he must have disappeared from the scene shortly after the Majâza victory, for nothing more is heard of him.

Abû'l-Mundhir Bashîr b. al-Mundhir of the B. Nâfi (Sâma b. Lu'ay) from 'Aqr Nizwâ we have also briefly come across; he is sometimes described as al-Shaykh al-Akbar, perhaps indicating he was the most learned of the missionaries. He is recorded as dying in Rabî' 178/794 and his descendants continued to be of importance. That date is perhaps to be questioned, for he had his say over the affair of the *shurât* putting to death 'Isâ b. Ja'far, commander of Hârûn al-Rashîd's expedition; that was quite definitely in the Imamate of al-Wârith b. Ka'b, which began, it seems (but see below), Dhû'l-Qa'da 179. All the indications are that Bashîr was in Oman before the Battle of Majâza (*inter alia*, he was at Bahlâ after the victorious Ibâdis razed the Julandâ settlement), which again makes little sense of 'Awtabi's statement that he came after the setting up of the *dawla*.

Munîr b. al-Nayyir al-Ja'lânî from the B. Riyâm is also a bit of a puzzle. Most improbably he is said to have died in the Battle of Damâ in 280/893, the final battle in the civil war which brought to an end the First Imamate. But that makes no sense of the fact that he wrote a long *Sîra* to the Imam Ghassân b. 'Abdullâh (192-207/808-23) about the early days of the Ibâdî movement, and that his father was active in al-Julandâ's Imamate. This story about his death must either be apocryphal or the result of some confusion, perhaps with his son. What matters is that he was missionary to the Riyam-Qudâ'a who predominated in the south-east part of the country, and there is a hint in his *Sîra* that he was writing to the Imam because he lived too far away. Local tradition has it that he came from what is now called Bilâd Bani Bû Ḥasan, where his grave is.

The fourth missionary, mentioned in all the sources except 'Awtabi, is Mûsâ b. Abi Jâbir of Izki who died in al-Wârith's Imamate in 181/797, reportedly at the age of 94 and a bit. This seems an impossibly old age to be actively organizing the Imamate, and I am inclined to disbelieve it. Nevertheless, he was active at the time of al-Julandâ b. Mas'ûd and (p.251) Shabîb fifty years earlier;<sup>17</sup> subsequently he took part in an abortive revolt against Râshid b. al-Nazr al-Julandâni, after which, perhaps to appease him, the Julandâ ruler appointed him as qadi.<sup>18</sup> At Nizwâ his influence was shared with his pupil (Abû 'Uthmân) Sulaymân b. 'Uthmân and Bashîr; Sulaymân became the leading qadi there after the two senior men died. All of which goes to show that perhaps Râshid al-Julandâ's tyranny was not as great as the Ibâdis made out, whilst Mûsâ himself emerges as a pretty ruthless schemer, joining a revolt by a bad man against a worse, as the *Bayân al-Shar'* also points out.

#### Al-Rabî' b. Ḥabîb

The standard sources all indicate that these four brought the *'ilm* from al-Rabî' in Basra to Oman, but add that al-Rabî' himself and Abû Sufyân reputedly came to Oman at the end of their lives. What is interesting about these four from a tribal point of view is that none was an Azdi. Two were from the Nizâr, one was a Kindi, and the fourth a Riyâmi from the Ja'lân. All were therefore preaching to non-Azd tribes, who for the most part lived on the peripheries of central Oman. One implication could be that the Azd needed no conversion. Some support for this might be found in the fact that the Omanis involved in the first attempts to establish an Imamate were Azd, B. Salîma and Farâhîd from the Batina, who supported the Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq uprising, whilst

the B. Hinâ were sympathetic to al-Julandâ b. Mas'ud. All were Mâlik b. Fahm tribes, all late-comers to Basra, all tribes that were mostly closely associated with the Muhallabids and the power structure in Khurâsân. And now the most important figure in Basra, who seems to have united in his hands both the *shirâ'* and *'ilm*, hitherto split between Ḥâjib and Abû 'Ubayda, was a Farâhîdi, al-Rabî' b. Ḥabîb (b. 'Amr b. Ḥabîb). And it was he whom 'Awtabi names as his fourth, or rather first, missionary to Oman, relegating Mûsâ b. Abi Jâbir to non-missionary status, not unreasonably if indeed he had spent most of his time in the country. And it is as a missionary that 'Awtabi speaks of al-Rabî', saying nothing of his role in Basra.

This is not the place to discuss al-Rabî', for his role has already been broached in Chapter 6 and will be further discussed in Chapter 14. Of his personal background we know little. There is no dispute that he was from the Farâhîd Mâlik b. Fahm, a clan almost as important as Hinâ; 'Awtabi attributes several renowned figures of Omani origins to Farâhîdi clans, (p.252) notably Ibn Durayd and al-Mubarrad (both rather questionable genealogies), and al-Khalîl b. Aḥmad (*K. al-'Ayn*, who originated from Wudâm on the Batina). More to the point from a political aspect is that, like the Hinâ, the Farâhîd had reached prominence in Khurâsân where Muḥammad b. Muththanâ was at one time leader of the Azd. Certainly, those living near Sohar at Majazz early become supporters of Ibâdism, for Balj b. 'Uqba, who with Mukhtar b. 'Awf (B. Salîma) brought the Azd contingent to Yemen in support of Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq, was a Farâhîdi. Al-Rabî' was actually born in Oman, and the fact that he reportedly died on his return at Ghaḍfân indicates that, like those involved with Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq, he was from the prominent Azd groups settled on the Batina in the Sohar area. But he seems to have spent most of his life in Basra. He was certainly a pupil of Abû 'Ubayda, and even when his teacher was alive had already gained a reputation as a *mufti*. In the standardized accounts he succeeded him as leader in Basra and certainly he played a vigorous role there. Indeed, a powerful figure in Basra was essential at this stage to promote an Ibâdi state after the failures of Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq and al-Julandâ in the Mashriq, and the collapse of the early proto-Imamates in the Maghrib, as too to offer guidance in increasingly preoccupying politico-theological disputes like the succession of 'Abd al-Wahhâb b. 'Abd al-Raḥmân in Tahert.

If it is correct that al-Rabî' did return to Oman, we must ask why. If it is simply to die back home, then why does 'Awtabi place him first and foremost amongst the missionaries? My own view—and it is little more than supposition—is that his role was less that of preaching the gospel than of political wheeling and dealing among the Azd. Somehow he had to persuade the major tribal power capable of destroying Julandâ power definitively to join the cause. So the Ibâdis groomed Ibn Abi 'Affan al-Yaḥmadi in Iraq as their potential candidate to take control in Oman once victory there was assured. And while about it, al-Rabî' may have encouraged the idea that Jâbir b. Zayd was both a Yaḥmadi and the founder of the Ibâdi movement. But al-Rabî' died before these plans were fulfilled, possibly in 170, but certainly before the fragile victory of Majâza seven years later.

#### Nizwâ

Now it was Mûsâ b. Abi Jâbir who took control, and installed the Yaḥmadi Ibn Abi 'Affân to run the campaign. Whether he was from the Fajḥ section that held the power in Rustâq is not revealed, but is likely in the light of subsequent events. In any case, Ibn Abi 'Affân clearly had



the ability to rally the tribesmen of the Ghadaf to his cause and was the man suited to lead the war.

**(p.253)** The essential feature of the deal, if the Yaḥmad were to throw their weight onto the side of the Ibâḍis, was leaders hip of the state. But some check on their political ambitions could be exercised by ensuring that the Imamate capital was in the Jawf, away from their own power base at Rustâq. The obvious choice was Nizwâ, where the tribes were quite varied. Today Nizwâ divides into Upper and Lower, but at the time it referred to Lower Nizwâ, with its two main quarters of 'Aqr and Su'âl, while Upper was designated as Samad. Two important wadis join at the market below the fort in 'Aqr, the Wadis Kalbûh and al-Abyaḍ (the latter joined upstream by the Wadi Tanûf and a little downstream of the junction by the Wadi Mi'aydin). The original Imam's fort ('*askar*) must have been that of the Sasanids which the Julandâ occupied, for it was not until the Imam al-Ṣalt's time that the present fort (*ḥiṣn*) was constructed (rebuilt in Ya'âruba times, when the great round fortress was added). Defended in the rear by the bastion of the Jabal al-Akhḍar and from the north by the foothill zone, Nizwâ nevertheless had easy access to Izki, which commanded the western exit of the Sumâyil Gap, as also to several sizeable downstream settlements, notably Manaḥ. So the Nizwâ complex was ideally located from both a strategic and hydrological point of view (with a much more developed *falaj* system than at present), but above all it was tribally separated from the Yaḥmad Jabal by the B. Riyâm on the Jabal Akhḍar plateau, who also commanded the wadis descending towards the Jawf. In the town itself the two principal quarters were dominated by clans that had proved themselves supporters of the Ibâḍi order, the B. Humaym and the B. Nâfi' (the latter, in the guise of the B. Ziyâd, Mushâqīṣa, and Umbu Sa'îd families, dominated 'Aqr until early Âl Bû Sa'îd times), while the leading clan in Samad was the B. al-Mu'ammâr (possibly 'Atik, see Chapter 13), but with important Kinda families who were to become highly influential as '*ulamâ*'. Neighbouring Manaḥ and Izki were also strongly under the influence of the B. Sâma '*ulamâ*'.

So the fort ('*askar*) at 'Aqr which the Julandâ had abandoned now became the official residence of the Imam, and this was reinforced by the ruling of 'Azzân b. al-Ṣaqr (d. 268/881-2) that the Imam must reside there, otherwise his Imamate would lapse. 'Takht Mâlik al-'Arab' now became 'Bayḍat al-Islâm'.

#### Ibn Abi 'Affân al-Yaḥmadi

But whatever the stipulations that the Imam's seat was in the Jawf, the Ibâḍi '*ulamâ*' had to offer the Imamate to the Yaḥmad, even if that meant compromising principles, at least for the nonce. And no one was wiler, and more ruthless in considering that the end justified the means, than Mûsâ b. Abi Jâbir. So (Muḥammad b. 'Abdullâh) Ibn Abi 'Affân was **(p.254)** appointed as—well, what? Considerable debate later emerged about how far he really was an Imam. Certainly Mûsâ was not prepared to give him full powers, but he did give him a considerable area to control, although not including the wealth of Sohar. At the same time, by playing divide-and-rule with the *shurât*, Mûsâ was able to build up his own position. Amongst Ibn Abi 'Affân's more heinous crimes in Ibâḍi eyes was to unleash Sa'îd b. Ziyâd al-Bakri in command of an expedition into the eastern provinces to avenge the events of 145 and B. Nâjiyya support for the Julandâ. Sa'îd was determined to destroy their settlements and sent a messenger to Mûsâ b. Abi Jâbir to say he had cut their palms. Mûsâ simply replied with Qur'ân LIX, 5.<sup>19</sup> It was a totally ambiguous response, for it was his duty to advise precisely what was prescribed about the conduct of war

and not just about palms; furthermore, he did not even enlarge on the B. Naḍîr precedent. So Sa'îd wreaked his revenge burning, killing, destroying houses as well as cutting down palms. When Wâ'il b. Ayyûb in Basra learnt of this he held Ibn Abi 'Affân as primarily responsible and declared he was not an Imam at all but a tyrant.

Led, it seems, by Bashîr, the 'ulamâ' complained: 'we had hoped to see what we wanted and saw what we despised (*karah*).' So Mûsâ agreed to get rid of Ibn Abi 'Affân. The first stage was to get his commanders out of the Nizwâ fort, which he did by giving them appointments around the country, but sending ahead to rescind the order before they arrived to take up their posts. Then Ibn Abi 'Affân, now alone in the castle, was ejected by the Muslims, who chose for themselves al-Wâarith b. Ka'b al-Kharûṣi as Imam.

In due course the way Ibn Abi 'Affân was deposed led to a lot of argument, because it became cited as a precedent for having appointed Râshid b. al-Nazr al-Fajhi over the deposed Imam al-Ṣalt, the event that precipitated civil war a century later. Indeed, it is alleged that Mûsâ gave allegiance to his replacement al-Wâarith b. Ka'b before even deposing Ibn Abi 'Affân. Various arguments are used to get round this problem by the Rustâq party. The standard statement produced is that Mûsâ made the appointment *haṭṭâ taḍa' al-ḥarb* or something to that effect. Consequently some say he was simply a provisional *difâ'i* Imam, appointed until the war was over; others that he was no more than a *wakîl* of the Muslims; yet others go as far as to say he was *amîr al-jaysh* and not an Imam at all. Al-Bisyâni, in his *Sîrat al-Su'âl*, even claims that he finds no evidence that there was any assembly over his appointment and that he could find no one from the *ahl al-da'wa* who gave him *walâya*: consequently there is no resemblance with the case of Râshid b. al-Nazr and al-Ṣalt, who was a (p.255) *shâri* Imam; Ibn Abi 'Affân did not have *aṣl al-imâma*.<sup>20</sup> Apart from the fact that this flies in the face of the evidence and that some form of consultation had presumably occurred (see below), this whole argument about *shâri* and *difâ'i* Imams was quite irrelevant to the period concerned (see Chapter 12).

The essential of the matter is Abû'l-Mu'thir's statement in his *K. al-Aḥdâth wa'l-Ṣifât* that at the time the Muslims were weak and dispersed, and that they basically had no choice. He was appointed because of the war, and those who gave him allegiance were those who deposed him (but note, he was given no chance to make a *tawba*). As 'Abd al-Raḥmân b. 'Awf said to 'Uthmân: 'I am the first to give you allegiance and the first to depose you if your light dims.' Abû'l-Mu'thir also cites the view that a man has automatically abdicated (*i'tazala*) if he weakens seriously from the law and the fight against the enemy (*ḍa'fa 'an al-aḥkâm wa 'an al-muḥâraba*). What all agree on is that even if he was an Imam he was not a just Imam, and that those who followed him in some form or other were those who deposed him. Abû 'Abdullâh maintains that his case was like that of 'Abdullâh b. Sa'îd in the Hadramawt after Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq's Imamate collapsed: he was deposed and replaced by Khanbash because he committed wrongdoings (*makfira*).

So he was replaced by al-Wâarith b. Ka'b al-Kharûṣi. Ibn Abi 'Affân had done the dirty work and Mûsâ was waiting to appoint him in his place. And in so doing he could not be accused of having usurped the Yaḥmad's rights. The date given by al-Sâlimi is Dhû'l-Qa'da 179.

Al-Wârith b. Ka'b al-Kharûṣi (179?-202/795?-808)

Al-Wârith was obviously a 'better' man than Ibn Abi 'Affân, and he came from a Yaḥmadi clan that was potentially a rival to the Fajḥ. And it is clear that Mûsâ b. Abi Jâbir had been working hand in glove with him from the beginning. He needed someone who was going to uphold Ibâḍi principles but was also malleable.

Interestingly, a mythology developed around al-Wârith, an image projected to portray an idealized Ibâḍi society and its leader. A simple peasant ploughing his field at Hijâr in the Wadi B. Kharûṣ in Julandâ times, he heard a voice repeat what a vision had told him the previous night, to make apparent the truth. So who was to help him, a poor, weak man? The soldiers of God (NB *junûd Allâh* not *shurât*). So he girded up his loins and made for Nizwâ, which he found full of tyranny and oppression. The rest of the story shows that in popular history it was his bravery in defying the *jabâbira* that led to his election. But the essential feature to (p.256) note is that it is the only case we have of myths being built around an Imam in Oman.

The date given by al-Sâlimi of his election in Dhû'l-Qa'da 179 is also subject to question. The *Kashf* gives it as 177, as too the anonymous Imam list;<sup>21</sup> and 177 is the year of Majâza. That this is not an error is confirmed in the *Kashf's* biographical section, where Bashîr's death is given as 178 (in Rabî' of that year according to al-Sâlimi), during the *walâya* of al-Wârith. Furthermore, Bashîr is reported as commenting on the killing of 'Isa b. Ja'far, which was quite definitely in al-Wârith's Imamate (see below). The *Kashf* also gives the date of Mûsâ b. Abi Jâbir's demise as 181 (the same date as al-Sâlimi), but adding that it was in the fourth year of al-Wârith's Imamate. Such quibbling over dates would be of little importance were it not that it may well indicate what actually happened. It could well be that al-Wârith had already won a position for himself and indeed been recognized by some as their Imam, as soon as the Majâza victory was announced. But for political reasons Mûsâ decided to give the main authority to Ibn Abi 'Affân until he could get rid of him, whereupon al-Wârith was formally appointed in 179. That al-Wârith was very much opposed to his predecessor is indicated by the fact that he exiled Sa'îd b. Ziyâd al-Bakri to Bahrayn and resisted all attempts at reconciliation.<sup>22</sup> Al-Wârith's Fajḥi successor, however, welcomed him back with full honours.

Apart from this, there is little specific about al-Wârith's Imamate. The main event was the 'Abbasid invasion.<sup>23</sup> It is probable that since al-Julandâ b. Mas'ûd's defeat the 'Abbasids had exercised an indirect control over Oman through the Julandâ, as they did in Hadramawt and southern Arabia which came under the sway of the Âl Ziyâd of Yemen, who made the *khutba* in their name and remitted the *kharâj* and suitable presents.<sup>24</sup> Certainly the Caliphs claimed the sovereignty and included Bahrayn and Oman in the Basran governorship. The Julandâ in turn presumably raised the taxes through their agents, who may even have included Ibâḍis like Khalaf b. Ziyâd al-Baḥrani, described as *'âmil al-sultân*. Later, after the civil war, the responsibilities of acting on behalf of *jabâbira* were much more closely defined, but the principle of better serving the Muslims by having a just man as an administrator or as qadi was certainly established in this period, viz. Mûsâ b. Abi Jabir's role as the Julandâ's qadi. It was in no one's interest to upset this quasi-autonomous status, which is why when the Julandâ threatened to complain to the (p.257) Caliphate authorities after the assassination of 'Abd al-'Azîz al-

Julandâni, the Ibâḍis of Basra knew it was an empty threat and told them to go ahead if they wanted.

But now, with the overthrow of Julandâ rule, there had been a fundamental change in regime and no remittance of taxes. That was presumably known in Baghdad during the following year and determined Hârûn al-Rashîd (who acceded in 170/786) to bring the wayward state back in line (perhaps as part of his campaigns against the Khârijis and other dissidents in Iran). An expedition consisting of 1,000 cavalry and 4,000 infantry was mounted under command of his uncle, 'Isâ b. Ja'far, which landed at Julfâr. Forewarned by Dâwûd b. Yazid al-Muhallab (still loyal to the old country!), the Wali of Sohar, Muqârish b. Muḥammad al-Yaḥmadi (note the governorship of this place had also passed into Yaḥmad hands<sup>25</sup>), marched out with 3,000 troops sent by the Imam and defeated 'Isâ at Ḥattâ, that is, the nearest passage that gave access to the Batina from the Julfâr region. 'Isâ made it back to his ships, but Abû Ḥumayd b. Falj (*sic*) al-Ḥuddâni al-Salûti commandeered three ships for his own men and managed to take 'Isâ prisoner, sending him to Sohar. The Imam, who had been advancing with a Nizwan force, learnt of the defeat when at Sayfam, and returned, uncertain whether or not the prisoner should be killed. His advisers were little help, 'Ali b. 'Uzra, saying it was the Imam's responsibility, so he decided against. Then, either a group, or one of the prominent *shurât*, decided to take the law into its own hands, and without telling either the Imam or his Wali, broke into the prison at Sohar and killed 'Isâ. Bashîr seems to have condoned the act.<sup>26</sup> There was a very real fear for a while that the Caliph would send an invasion in revenge, but it faded away after his death (193/809). It is a measure of the reputation of the *shurât* and the way that the Oman navy was built up that the country was left alone for the next hundred years.

Nothing much else is to be learnt about al-Wârith's life, except that there is nothing but general praise for his Imamate. Al-Bisyâni tries to make out he was given a *shâri* Imam's oath, but this is meaningless. It was in a time of *shirâ'* and it was his duty to pursue the *da'wa*. What may well have happened is that, with the death of the two grand old men who had set up the Imamate, Mûsâ and Bashîr, al-Wârith was much freer to act as he saw best and himself took control of the military force, which he disciplined to act according to Ibâḍi rules. The manner of his death also exemplifies both his sense of duty and his courage. When the Wadi (**p.258**) Kalbûh flooded suddenly he took a party of seventy men to rescue the prisoners for whom he was responsible, and all were drowned (Jumâdi I 192). So much revered was he that he was buried between the two great quarters of (Lower) Nizwâ, 'Aqr and Su'âl, to settle the dispute of who should have the honour.

The 'election' of Ghassân b. 'Abdullâh al-Fajḥi al-Yaḥmadi (192-207/808-23)

Al-Wârith's unexpected death led to a coup by the Fajḥ Yaḥmad, who cut short the consultation process, excluding the people from the SIRR and the north. In studying the historical evolution of elections, the ideal seems to be that when an Imam dies a fairly clear consensus has generally already been reached concerning the succession, including the views of the existing Imam. Once he starts to sink, the '*ulamâ'* assemble and the actual election follows his demise without prolonged discussion. This by no means precludes debate, but differences of opinion have been largely resolved by the time the old Imam dies. So the 'election' process has three constituent parts: prior consultation, the formal election, and the consequent oath of obedience. Seen in this light the election follows a sequence, the essential prerequisite being consultation, and the oath

---

of allegiance serving as the final seal of approval of the chosen candidate, whatever previous views had been held. So provided stages one and three have been properly fulfilled, stage two is little more than a formality.

Examination of the quasi-contemporary sources of the First Imamate in fact show how little is said about the conduct of an election. The main source, Abû Qaḥṭân, says virtually nothing. True, he is essentially dealing with the issue of deposing an Imam, but one would expect him to justify, in some measure at least, how he was selected. As far as he is concerned it is a *fait accompli*, and all he says about the selection of the three last main Imams, 'Abd al-Malik, Muḥannâ, and al-Ṣalt, is that the Muslims gave them *walâya*. Of course, he says, the need for an Imam to further the true religion is an imperative, as the Muslims quickly appreciated after the death of Prophet, and they saw no one better than Abû Bakr. Since there was no difference of opinion concerning him (wasn't there?), they promoted him Imam. Abû Qaḥṭân says even less about 'Umar except that they chose him. Naturally, he gets more interesting about 'Uthmân, because there was a *shûrâ*. So the *ahl al-shûrâ* who had chosen 'Umar consulted amongst themselves and agreed on 'Abd al-Raḥmân b. 'Awf as being the most worthy, and he *walâ al-khilâfa 'Uthmân b. 'Affân*. In other words, they consulted and chose 'Abd al-Raḥmân, but he considered it expedient to select 'Uthmân. We get no explanation of how *istaqarr al-amr li 'Ali b. Abi Ṭâlib*. After they had deposed 'Ali, the (p.259) Muslims put forward over themselves (*qadamû 'alâ anfusihim*) 'Abdullâh b. Wahb al-Râsibi. After this we go into secession (*khârija*) mode, as befits true Khawârij. So nothing specific is said about how 'Abdullâh b. Yaḥyâ (Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq) became Imam. Simply that he seceded in Yemen and al-Mukhtâr b. 'Awf followed him and that was in the same true path (*sîra*) as the people of Nahrawân, Nukhayla, and Mirdâs (Abû Bilâl), that of the Prophet, Abû Bakr and 'Umar. Abû Qaḥṭân simply comments that they had raised (*qad aqâm*) 'Abdullâh b. Yaḥyâ as Imam in Yemen and there was no secession greater (*fa lam tukhraj khârija min al-muslimîn aqwâ ...*) than that of Ṭâlib and Mukhtâr. Al-Julandâ b. Mas'ûd is simply described as going out and being martyred with his companions, with no mention even of his being an Imam. We then move on to the Muslim victory (after Majâza) and the case of Ibn Abi 'Affân. After he had been evicted from Nizwâ they assembled, 'and chose for themselves an Imam, promoting al-Wârith b. Ka'b'. And that is as close as he gets to saying how al-Wârith was selected. The justification comes in his course of conduct, the only one of the First Imamate, incidentally, against whom there seems to be no reproach in Abû Qaḥṭân's account.

The reason, of course, why Abû Qaḥṭân does not elaborate is that there is no real constitutional process. It was 'Umar who put emphasis on *shûrâ*, and 'Uthmân's was really the only election that outwardly conformed to the notion. But even then, the precedent involved a very close group of interested parties from Quraysh, and Abû Qaḥṭân is careful not to say who they were, except to speak of the role of 'Abd al-Raḥmân and imply it was these same worthies who had decided on 'Umar. If the true story of the selection of the Prophet's first four successors were in fact spelt out it would argue both for precedence in Quraysh and an extremely narrow consultation process. It is for this reason that the mode of consultation is not clearly laid down by the Ibâḍis. Leaders of the Rustâq school, like Abû'l-Mu'thir and Ibn Baraka, note that five is the minimum for the consulting body, as per Abû Bakr and 'Uthmân, others that two constitute consultation. Yet others say it is immaterial; all that matters is satisfaction. Ibn Baraka says the guide should be 'Umar, who was selected and confirmed by mutual satisfaction of his performance.

---

So in fact there was no real electoral process until al-Şalt; it was essentially the choice of the leading Sâmi *'âlim*. The first Imam-maker was Mûsâ b. Abi Jâbir, though there were others in the background like his colleague Bashîr, and the Nizwân clearly had men he listened to. But he was the one who decided, rather like 'Abd al-Raĥmân b. 'Awf, and no one gainsaid him. Mûsâ decreed Ibn Abi 'Affân for purely pragmatic reasons, he was a Yaĥmadi. His case was essentially no different from al-Julandâ, except that he proved a good choice and fulfilled the hopes placed in him, whereas Ibn Abi 'Affân did not; but then it is probable that Mûsâ never **(p.260)** expected him to do so and always planned to get rid of him once he had served his purpose. Having done so, 'they' promoted al-Wârith b. Ka'b, by which Abû Qaĥţân probably means that al-Wârith was a popular choice, who probably already had a certain following. But it would be a mistake to see it as some sort of democratic election. Mûsâ was still the power in the land, and he chose the man best suited.

But what happened after al-Wârith died smacks of opportunism. Quite clearly the Fajĥ party saw this as a chance to bring back their own man. They were helped by the fact that there was no really strong *'âlim* to contend with. Mûsâ and Bashîr were dead and there was now a plethora of *'ulamâ'*. Munîr listed fourteen whom the Imam Ghassân ought to listen to: *quot homines tot causae*. Or as another Fajĥi Imam (Muhannâ) said to Mûsâ b. Abi Jâbir a few years later, freely translated: 'I know why you are here: if the people of Oman had their way they would be changing their Imam every year.' In view of the fact that they did or nearly did depose four out of the first six Imams, he may have been right. So it was only the Nizwân *'ulamâ'* that had to be fixed if the pro-Ghassân party moved fast, The most prominent of them was Sulaymân b. 'Uthmân, who told Mas'ada b. Tamîm that they ought to write to the people of Sîrr to come. 'Do you mean you want to delay things, Oh Abâ 'Uthmân, until they come and start disputing with us; so let's cut things short.'<sup>27</sup> Very elliptic and very enigmatic. Who is 'us'? Obviously the Fajĥ party who now imposed their Imam, bypassing the Sîrr *'ulamâ'* who might well have wanted their man, 'Abd al-Malik b. Ĥumayd, the person who had been responsible for the Majâza victory. It was the first crack in the balance of power that finally broke apart eighty years later.

Ghassân was a strong personality who reverted to Ibn Abi 'Affân's policy in pacifying the country, as witness the way he brought back Sa'îd b. Ziyâd with honours and his actions in the Julandâ feud. Munîr b. al-Nayyir's homily underlines that. Having highlighted the way the true path had been observed 'before you and before us' in al-Julandâ b. Mas'ûd's time, he indicates how the *shurât* degenerated into tribal fanatics, and the *bawârij* pirates plundered the coasts. The fact that it is not quite clear when that period ends implies that it hadn't, and significantly says nothing about Ibn Abi 'Affân or al-Wârith, although clearly he considers Mûsâ b. Abi Jâbir to have been the main guide for the whole period, placing him at the start of the list that established al-Julandâ's Imamate! Finally Munîr says: 'Learn from what I have written and model yourself on those who went before ... and follow the *siyar* of ...'; there follows the list of the fourteen contemporary *'ulamâ'* to whom he should listen. Another *'âlim*, Abû Mawdûd Ĥabîb b. Ĥafş al-Hilâli, also wrote to **(p.261)** him at the time of his election, calling for more justice and equality for the people,<sup>28</sup> which might imply that his predecessor al-Wârith had not been the paragon of virtue portrayed in the histories.

Despite, or perhaps because of, his forcefulness, Ghassân seems to have brought much benefit to Oman during his fifteen-year rule, notably in taking control of its maritime trade by dealing

---

with the piratical *bawârij* and taking the war to 'Hind', and settling the general terms and conditions for overseas commerce at Sohar (see below). All the evidence shows that he was staunch in his principals, ransoming an Omani slave who had been captured and taken abroad when fighting with the official *shurât* for the huge sum of 4,000 dirhams, paid from the *Bayt al-Mâl*,<sup>29</sup> and he also did his best to prevent over-exploitation of slaves on the Batina. He generally ruled in accordance with the opinions of the '*ulamâ*', but in turn made them take responsibility for their decisions. One case cited concerns a killing, but the other is much more interesting as it shows his appreciation of the importance of the *falaj* system for the agricultural economy. Faced with the problem of whether payment should be given to allow work on the headwaters of a Manaḥ *falaj* which rose under Nizwâ land, he posed the problem to Sulaymân b. 'Uthmân as though it concerned repairs to the Nizwâ *falaj* that rose under Samad's cultivated land. Sulaymân confirmed right of access but also that payment was due. This infuriated the Nizwans who forced him to change it, which of course is exactly what Ghassân wanted, and he adjudged accordingly for the people of Manaḥ. His astuteness is also illustrated by the story of how, when out on his Friday promenade to the tomb of al-Wârith (due piety for his predecessor), he noted that water-moss (*tuḥlub*) was beginning to grow in the *ghayl* channels in the wadi. Determined to root out those responsible for such deterioration, he sounded out the wealthy by pretending he needed a loan for war against Hind. He concluded it was neither the merchants nor the landowners (who, for the most part he found, were smallholders) but the state's own leading officials (*al-wuzarâ' wa arbâb al-dawla*) who were responsible. These he changed, and next Friday he saw nothing impeding the *ghayl*. A charming story, but one of great significance: the leader who gets out in the field and finds out what is going on!

So, one way and another, Ghassân may have come to power in less than correct conditions and he may have been fairly unscrupulous in his pursuit of the Julandâ feud, but he was capable, wily, and well intentioned and his rule saw a great increase in Oman's prosperity.

**(p.262)** 'Abd al-Malik b. Ḥumayd (B. 'Ali Azd; 207 or 208-26/823-41)

Once more, nothing is said about 'Abd al-Malik's election, but we do know that by his time the B. Sâma family had re-established pre-eminence and it was a maternal grandson of Mûsâ b. Abi Jâbir, Abû 'Ali Mûsâ b. 'Ali (177-230/793-844), who was the power behind the throne. Quite clearly he was determined that the northerners should be propitiated by electing the man who, in his youth, had been responsible for overthrowing Julandâ rule at Majâza. This was the only time that the Imamate went outside the Yaḥmad, and even then it was still in Azd hands. And if we look at the speed with which 'Abd al-Malik's own successor, Muhannâ b. Jayfar, a Fajḥ Yaḥmadi, was elected it was probably part of a compromise understanding. Certain features of 'Abd al-Malik's Imamate are discussed in the next chapter, and all that need be noted here is that he pursued the Julandâ feud ferociously, despite the fact that the Mahra were clearly trying to make peace, and was adamant in his determination to drive them out, calling on the Ibâdis to fight them because they had shed Muslim blood. But eventually Mûsâ persuaded him to accept their reluctant submission.

Mûsâ was certainly a politician, for his uncle Muḥammad b. Mûsâ (d. 210/826) said he was getting much too worldly, and himself retired into an ascetic life. Mûsâ seems to have considered his role as a sort of chief qadi, a position that in fact has no formal recognition in the Imamate constitution, at least in Oman. He was certainly learned, and several of his rulings have

been recorded, including detailed advice in reply to Muhannâ about the distribution of *ghanîma*.<sup>30</sup> He was decisive in settling disputes, notably that referred by the Wali of Sohar concerning a Jew who killed another because he was converting to Islam. If, Mûsâ ruled, he had recited the *shahâda*, then the killer's life was forfeit. He was also quite capable of overruling the collective opinion of his colleagues, even though clearly in the wrong (as in the instance of a killing at Nakhal<sup>31</sup>). This build-up of his own position reflected Mûsâ's determination to create a strong, albeit rightly guided, central state. Thus he was very much responsible for reinforcing the rights of the Imam over the proliferating '*ulamâ*', and his pronouncement that: 'No army is raised, no banner is held, no soldier ordered, no *ḥadd* punishment ordained, no *ḥukm* (ruling) given except through the Imam' is regularly quoted as primordial.<sup>32</sup> Al-Bisyâni adds (p.263) that the Imam is compulsory, a *farîḍa*, as witness the consensus of the *umma*, *muhâjirûn*, and *ansâr*.

So the Imam issued the orders, but it was Mûsâ who largely determined what they were. And such was his influence that he avoided the problem of having to depose 'Abd al-Malik when, in his old age, he became deaf and blind and ended up gaga, worse than the Imam al-Ṣalt, Abû Qaḥṭân comments. There was a general discussion about what to do, which Mûsâ cut short by saying he would take charge and stay in the fort. Which he did.

Muhannâ b. Jayfar al-Fajḥi al-Yaḥmadi (226-37/841-51)

Once again Mûsâ was the man behind the election of the Imam. The oath of allegiance he used is clear evidence that the distinction between various types of Imam is an *ex post facto* rationalization. Muhannâ was certainly a *shâri* Imam in all senses of the word, commander of the *shurât*, bent on expansion, and very much with full powers. But Mûsâ's oath simply specified '*alâ ṭa'at Allah wa ṭa'at rasûlihi wa'l-amr bi'l-ma'rûf wa'l-nahâ'an al-munkar*'<sup>33</sup> Al-Salmi<sup>34</sup> is inclined to consider Muhannâ as a great religious scholar, as well as having a strong character, but this opinion seems largely based on the letter he wrote to Mu'âdh b. Ḥarb concerning theological and legal matters. But as he also shows from the *Jâmi' ibn Ja'far*, in fact it was a reply from his Qadi Abû 'Ali Mûsâ; obviously sent in the Imam's name, rather as later Abû 'Abdullâh was to do with the Imam al-Ṣalt.

However that may be, in Muhannâ Mûsâ had met his match. An awe-inspiring man of whom all were afraid, he built up the navy to 300 ships, kept a standing army of 10,000 troops and 8,000-9,000 riding beasts at Nizwâ, where also lived some 14,000 *ra'aya* (subject peoples) whose houses extended from 'Aqr as far as Su'âl. Muhannâ also relentlessly pursued the Julandâ feud. While the Mahra had now been theoretically accepted into the fold by 'Abd al-Malik, they did all they could to avoid paying their taxes to the Wali of Sinaw, which along with Adam and the Jalân towns controlled the desert areas of southern and south-western Oman and its inhospitable southern coast. So Muhannâ prepared a contingent under a Yaḥmadi to deal with them, and delegated a member of Mûsâ's own clan to use the outlying settlement of 'Izz, to collect tax from the nomads. Defied by a Mahri over his assessment, he threatened to send him to join the graves of his fellows whom the *shurât* had killed in 'Abd al-Malik's time and gave the Mahra three alternatives: to get out; full-scale war; or bring their animals each year to Nizwâ to be taxed, and woe betide if they tried to cheat. They had no alternative but to accept.



**(p.264)** In the north the Julandâ raised another revolt<sup>35</sup> and killed the Wali of Tuwâm, Abû'l-Waḍḍâḥ, who is probably the father of Abû Ziyâd Waḍḍâḥ b. 'Uqba, then probably military commander in Sohar. The Imam immediately sent a contingent under his military commander at Nizwâ, al-Ṣaqr b. 'Azzân (b. al-Ṣaqr?), while the Wali of Sohar, Abû Marwân, attacked with a huge force, reputedly 12,000, that included a mercenary Indian contingent. These *mushrikîn* feature in Abû'l-Ḥawâri's *Jâmi'*<sup>36</sup> in connection with using non-Muslim forces with the Muslims, recounting how Waḍḍâḥ b. 'Uqba, sent them by boat to smoke out the Indian and *mushrikîn* pirate lairs in the region under his command, that is, around the Musandam Peninsula. Such use is permitted, Abû'l-Ḥawâri states, so long as they conform to the proper code of warfare. Now the danger of using ill-disciplined foreign troops was demonstrated when, under their commander al-Maṭṭâr al-Hindi, the Indian contingent proceeded to create mayhem in the Julandâ villages, burning, pillaging, and raping the women who had run away into the desert.

The election of al-Ṣalt b. Mâlik al-Kharûṣi (237-deposed 272/851-86)

Even before Mûsâ died, mutterings were being heard among the '*ulamâ*' concerning Muhannâ's rule and he was delegated to make representations to the Imam, from whom he got short shrift. After Mûsâ's death, and as the Imam aged, so his rule became increasingly tyrannical in the eyes of the moderates. The result was that when he lay dying there was a serious row and a great deal of politicking took place. To his fury, someone let on that Abû 'Abdullâh Muḥammad b. Maḥbûb (Abû Sufyân's son), leader of the anti-Muhannâ brigade along with Bashîr b. al-Mundhir (the missionary's grandson), had secretly dissociated from Muhannâ in order to discredit him with the general populace, who had admired the prosperity the Imam's strong rule had brought. Abû 'Abdullâh's own candidate was the Kharûṣi, al-Ṣalt b. Mâlik. Ibn Ruzayq gives him the additional *nisba* of Sitâli,<sup>37</sup> which, if correct, shows that he came from Istâl, the tribal capital in the Wadi B. Kharûṣ, and next door to Hijâr from where al-Wârith had originated; in other words very much in the core of the Kharûṣ *dâr* and outside the area of Fajḥ control in Rustâq. The main opposition came from those who had held senior posts under Muhannâ, notably his qadi Muḥammad b. 'Ali (relative of Abû 'Ali Mûsâ b. 'Ali?), Abû Marwân who held the coveted post of Wali of Sohar, and his assistant Ziyâd b. al-Waḍḍâḥ, Khâlîd b. Muḥammad, Muhannâ's deputy, and **(p.265)** al-Ṣaqr b. 'Azzân (al-Yaḥmadi?<sup>38</sup>), his military commander at Nizwâ, and so on, all with too much to lose from a change in regime. In this connection it is worth noting that one of al-Ṣalt's first acts was to remove Abû Marwân from Sohar and subsequently (249/863) appoint Abû 'Abdullâh as qadi there.

Nevertheless, spirits seem to have been calmed by propitiating discussion and correspondence between the senior '*ulamâ*', and in the actual election the only real opposition seems to have come from the qadi Muḥammad b. 'Ali. News that Muhannâ had died came while the Friday prayers were being said and so they straight away met in the Bayt al-Mashûra.<sup>39</sup> Abû'l-Mu'thir (al-Ṣalt b. Khamîs al-Kharûṣi) recounts how they were in council when a drop of blood fell on his robe so he went out to wash it (probably a polite way of avoiding having to admit he was taken short), and when he returned they had decided on his relative; dissatisfied with his excuse, they insisted on a *tawba*. Reading between the lines it is clear that matters had already been fixed, so that al-Ṣalt's four main supporters, Bashîr b. al-Mundhir, Abû 'Abdullâh, al-Mu'allâ b. Munîr (b. al-Nayyir al-Riyâmi), and 'Abdullâh b. al-Ḥakm<sup>40</sup> carried the day, with the others subsequently falling into line. A fairly decisive feature may well have been that Abû 'Abdullâh was prepared to

overlook Muhannâ's misdeeds and not raise a scandal over his doings provided that he got his way. And it is perhaps worth noting that it was none of the '*ulamâ*' who said Muhannâ's burial prayer, but his own son, Jayfar.

So finally the moderate '*ulamâ*' had made their voice heard and a long new era dawned under a Kharûši Imam. And the real guiding spirit was the son of the last 'Imam' of Basra who had come to live in Oman. Curiously enough, he was not altogether welcome!

Before discussing Abû 'Abdullâh's role, however, something must first be said about Oman's expansion overseas during the time of these first Imams.

### Omani Expansion Overseas

The advent of Islam in some measure had dislocated the old Sasanid *Arđ al-Hind*. The main problem initially was the piratical attacks of the *bawârij* raiding the Omani coast and Muslim shipping in general. An **(p.266)** early attempt to deal with them had some success when, after two seaborne expeditions had failed, Muḥammad b. Qâsim al-Thaqafi led a punitive expedition overland against the Raja of Sind, establishing Muslim control as far as Multan and installing a Muslim colony at the important port of Daybul (Dêbal or Dêwal).<sup>41</sup> But this in no way ended the problem, for the *bawârij* lairs were numerous and many were nominal Muslims, entrenched around the entrance to the Gulf in the borderlands of Oman, and the various *sîfs* on the lower Persian coast, where they plundered as far as Iraq and Fârs, and from Mahra territory towards Aden. That incidentally raised the issue of whether they could be attacked without first issuing a *da'wa*. Abû 'Abdullâh believed they should be summonsed, but the general opinion was there was no need at sea, only when attacking by land. There was no problem about the Hind pirates because they were *mushrikin* and therefore subject to plunder and enslavement, but the Muslim were *ahl al-baghy*, a *qawm* attacking the *ahl al-ṣalât*.<sup>42</sup>

The matter was first seriously taken into hand by the Imam Ghassân, who installed himself at Sohar in the winter of 201/816 for five years (the rule about residing in Nizwâ possibly resulted from this) and started building up the Omani navy, which reached 300 ships during Muhannâ's Imamate. During Ghassân's Imamate also some basic taxation principles were developed by Hâshim b. Ghaylân in consultation with two (probably local) leading '*ulamâ*'. This is interesting, because from the start Jâbir had recognized local custom (*sunnat arđikum*), so long as it was not in conflict with the *sunna* proper.<sup>43</sup> The main ruling was that merchants coming from (polytheist) India were taxed straightaway on what they sold, but otherwise tax was only due after residing a year (*ḥawl*). Similarly, those coming from Basra or Sîrâf did not pay until they had resided a year, whether or not they had sold goods.

It will be noted that Basra(-Obollah) and Sîrâf, the main emporia serving Iraq and Fârs, whose extensive hinterland at that period extended towards the Great Desert to include Yazd, were the two ports specified. On the Arab side of the Gulf there were no ports of any real importance, and as insecurity grew, possibly because of declining 'Abd al-Qays power in Bahrayn,<sup>44</sup> the overland route down the coast, never particularly important in any case, was more or less abandoned.<sup>45</sup> Over on the Persian side below Sîrâf and Fârs the territory was fragmented between minor dynasties, all of Omani origin: in ascending order, the *Sîf* of the Ibn/Âl 'Umâra, extending from the entrance to the Gulf to above Qays, followed **(p.267)** by that of the Âl Abû Zuhayr (of Sâma

b. Lu'ay origins), whose territory ran as far as Nuḡaym; from there to Jannâba was the *Sîf* of the al-Muḡaffar b. Ja'far, and finally that of the Âl Şaffâr, whom Işṡakhri, like the Omani sources, describes as from the Julandâ b. Karkar (B. Salîma), the oldest Muslim rulers in Fârs.<sup>46</sup>

As Caliphate authority declined during the 3/9<sup>th</sup> century, the first and last of these emerged as important powers. In Işṡakhar, the original Sasânid capital, the Şaffârîds displaced the extremely rich Âl Hanḡala b. Tamîm family (the descent of 'Urwa b. Udayya, brother of Abû Bilâl, both Muhakkima martyrs), helped by Aḡmad b. al-Ḥasan al-Azdi, also of Omani Julandâ b. Karkar origins, after Muḡammad b. Wâşil al-Hanḡali had tried to gain control of his Ramm al-Kârîyan territory. Ya'qûb b. Layth now installed himself in Shiraz, which was by this time the main centre of the Fârs *kûra*.<sup>47</sup> At the lower end of the Persian coast the B. 'Umâra, also of supposed Julandâ b. Karkar descent, seriously started to build their control, based in Huzû opposite Qays Island, and from a reputedly impregnable centre at al-Dîkdân began to tax shipping entering the Gulf. Inland their domain extended as far as Kirman, which gave them mastery of the main trade route from the Gulf into southern Persia and Seistan. Seistan was then very much an area of moderate 'Khawârij' influence, and its merchants were reputed to be the most honest in the world.

Naturally, therefore, there was rivalry between the Şaffarîds and Âl 'Umâra, who were not only affecting Sîrâf's trade but also their Seistan domain. Under 'Amr b. al-Layth (d. 289/902-3) they fought the Âl 'Umâra for two years and were only successful after Aḡmad b. al-Ḥasan al-Azdi once again came to their support. It could only have been a limited success, for the Âl 'Umâra continued to control their area (confirmation of that from coins struck by Raḡwân b. Ja'far in 340/951-2<sup>48</sup>), while both 'Awtabi and Yâqûṡ show they were still of some importance in their respective periods.

To this general changing political picture affecting Gulf trade may be added the Zanj revolt in southern Iraq, which lasted from 255 to 270 (869 to 883), and which led to a general decline in Basran trade and a removal of some of the Omani community back home, including Ibn Durayd,<sup>49</sup> who lost his property in the Zanj attack of 257/870-1 and who stayed for **(p.268)** some twelve years during the Imamate of al-Şalt. Also relevant is the fall of the T'ang dynasty and the sack of Canton in 264/878. This should not be exaggerated. The China trade was only a small part of the general commerce of the Indian Ocean system, as an anonymous account of 237/851 makes clear,<sup>50</sup> and it was soon re-established through a new entrepot, probably on the Malaysian Peninsula. Besides, it was largely concentrated at Sîrâf at this stage.

All of which basically played into Sohar's hands. In early Islamic times Sîrâf was more important, but the general decline of security in the Gulf and the rise of the Şaffarîds in Fârs was probably to its detriment. By contrast, the Omanis had dealt with the pirates and their shipping enjoyed the protection of a major navy. Unlike the Sîrâfis, they were generally on good terms with the Julandâ b. Karkar families, and in any case Sohar lay outside the entrance to the Gulf. So both towards the Gulf and India commerce could flourish, while the routes towards Aden were now relatively safe and their East African commerce started prospering. That, however, is a subject I will deal with in the next chapter when considering the legal and commercial regime that came into existence after Abû 'Abdullâh became qadi in Sohar.

Notes:

- (1) I have not seen Khalaf's *sîra* (except in quotation over the Dibâ affair), but from Al-Salmi's brief description (Thesis, no. xxx) it too places the emphasis on deeds as well as words.
- (2) A favourite phrase is, 'and their perspicacity is blind (*â 'mâ absâruhum*) when they claim ...'
- (3) AB204v and 205r. See also *Tuḥfa*, i. 107–8, where al-Sâlimi gives his sources simply as the *siyar*.
- (4) One of 'Awtabi's eight Hinâ *'arâfa* is B. Sahm b. Muḥârib.
- (5) I suspect those at Naba' were from the secondary B. Hinâ group already established (as today) in control of the Lower Sumâyil, with some spreading round the Ṭaww towards the Ghadaf. That would account both for the attack on Damâ, then the main centre on the Lower Batina, and reach Ibrâ via the Wadi 'Aqq.
- (6) He was buried there along with his son Muḥammad (MS 2424).
- (7) I have tried to make sense of accounts in *Tuḥfa*, i. 123–4, 129, the *Bayân al-Shar'* (Book lxviii), 'Awtabi's report under B. Hina, loc. cit., and Abû'l-Ḥawâri's *sîra* to the Hadramis.
- (8) I am grateful to Mr 'Ali Maḥrûqi, an archaeologist with the Heritage Ministry, for the location of the site. Ibn Maddâd MS 280r places it in the Dhahira (whence presumably *Tuḥfa*), but it certainly makes more sense if Râshid was away recruiting Mahra, to have moved through the outlying centre of Adam, located well beyond Manaḥ.
- (9) *Bayan al-Shar*, i. 16 (al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥawâri from Abû 'Abdullâh).
- (10) Cf. *Bayân al-Shar'*, lxviii. 9: *Muṣannaf*, x.
- (11) Abû Qaḥṭân, *Sîra*.
- (12) As MS 2424 claims.
- (13) *Tuḥfa*, i. 108.
- (14) Cf. in particular *Tuḥfa*, i. 125 for the Fajḥ.
- (15) Curiously enough, the only person to name their centre is al-Hamdân, *Ṣifa*, 211, who says it is al-Juwaym. Unfortunately this is not much help (Tuwâm?).
- (16) As also in a MS of *Jâmi' Abi'l-Ḥawâri* ch. i on *ṭalb al-'ilm* I saw in MNHC, but which, I think is a gloss from the *K al-Ḍiya'*. This list, incidentally gives the four standard names for those who *naqal al-'ilm* from Iraq.
- (17) See Munîr b. al-Nayyir's *Sîra*: Bisyâni's *sîrat al-Suâl* also indicates he participated in forming al-Julandâ's Imamate.
- (18) Abû'l-Ḥawâri in *Muṣannaf*, x. 74.

(19) Abû'l-Ḥawâri, letter to the Hadramis.

(20) Cf. also Abû Qaḥṭân, *Sîra*.

(21) See References, Anon. MS 557.

(22) *Muṣannaf*, x. 37.

(23) Ṭabari (iii. 706) in fact gives it under the year 189. Which, if correct, obviates the above argument around the dates 177-9!

(24) Ba Wazîr 1378 AH, 61.

(25) Yaḥyâ al-Yaḥmadi, known as Abû'l-Muqâriṣh, who led the campaign against the Mahra in Muhannâ's Imamate was probably a relative (*Tuhfa*, i. 153).

(26) Cf. Abû'l-Ḥawâri's letter to the Hadramis (also *Tuhfa*, i. 118 ff.).

(27) QS viii. 313-14.

(28) Al-Salmi, Thesis, no. xxxv (*non vidi*).

(29) *Tuhfa*, i. 130 (see next chapter).

(30) In MS 493 of *Jâmi'*, Ibn Ja'far, vol iii.

(31) Abû 'Abdullâh refers to this well-known case when writing to the Imam al-Ṣalt, which, he says 'you will remember', in connection with a similar case at Bisyâ (*Tuhfa*, i. 193-5).

(32) It was recorded by Waḍḍâh b. 'Uqba and transmitted by him or his son Ziyâd. For various readings see *Bayân al-Shar'*, lxviii.

(33) *Ibid.* 9.

(34) Thesis and 2009b.

(35) *Tuhfa*, i. 154-5.

(36) MNHC edn., i. 101.

(37) See his biography in SQ 398v-99r.

(38) Ibn Ruzayq has Ṣaqr b. 'Azzân b. Ṣaqr being a Yaḥmadi (SQ 255r). The famous 'âlim 'Azzân b. Ṣaqr did have a son called Ṣaqr (cf. QS viii. 397), who would have been of an age to command forces.

(39) Cf. al-Riqayshi's commentary to the *Da'â'm*.

(40) Member of a distinguished 'ulamâ' family from 'Aqr Nizwâ (QS viii. 306 and 313).

(41) For details see Gabrieli 1965.

(42) *Muṣannaf*, xi: see also *Tuhfa*, i. 123.

(43) Francesca 2005: 248.

(44) Ibn Khurradâdhbih (3/9<sup>th</sup> cent.) describes the inhabitants as pirates (*laṣūṣ*).

(45) Archaeological evidence confirms a general hiatus in sites along the Arab coast between the 7-8<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. See for Abu Dhabi area King 1998.

(46) Iṣṭakhri (mid-4/10<sup>th</sup> cent.), notably pp. 116-17 and 140-1, is our primary source. For further references see Wilkinson 1979.

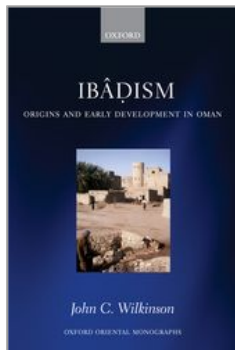
(47) Cf. *EI2*, arts. Fârs and Iṣṭakhar.

(48) Cf. *inter alia* Tiesenhäusen in *Revue Belge de Numismatique* (1875), 337 ff.; Bergman *Numismatische Zeitschrift* (1876), 38-9. This is the ruler whom Yâqût (art. Huzû) describes as being defeated and the dynasty being brought to an end in 'Aḍud al-Dawla's time.

(49) See notably Ibn Khâllikân's biography of him and Ṭabari, iii. 2283.

(50) Cf. Reinaud, Arabic text (1811: 6); this is presumably the merchant Sulaymân whom Ibn Faḳîh (p. 11) quotes for the same information.

University Press Scholarship Online  
**Oxford Scholarship Online**



## Ibâdism: Origins and Early Development in Oman

John C. Wilkinson

Print publication date: 2010

Print ISBN-13: 9780199588268

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2011

DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.001.0001

### Law and Order

John C. Wilkinson

DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.003.0009

#### **[ - ] Abstract and Keywords**

This chapter describes the establishment of the new Imamate state order, and in particular the role of Abû 'Abdullah, son of the last Basran leader, Abu Sufyân. The confrontation with the conservative Omani 'ulama' is characterized by the acrimonious theological debate over the Creation of the Qur'ân and the suspect nature of Mu'tazili influence. Abû 'Abdullâh's role in developing the principles for selecting an Imam, the issue of *wuqûf* (suspending judgment), advising other Ibâdî communities, but above all in harmonizing Islamic principles with the pragmatic needs of daily life in Oman are illustrated. The establishment of a maritime legal code commensurate with expanding maritime trade is described, including discussion of the reconquest of Socotra as a base on the African coast, whose interest in the Muslim world at this time was as a source of slaves from both Abyssinia and increasingly Bilâd al-Zanj. An attempt is also made to reconstruct the early history of the Imamate in Hadramawt.

*Keywords:* Abu 'Abdullâh Muhammad b. Maḥbûb, Wuqûf, Qur'ân, Mu'tazili influence, maritime law, Hadramawt, Imamate, Oman

#### **Abû 'Abdullâh Muḥammad B. Maḥbûb**

*The Âl Ruḥayl and the winding up of the Basran school*

Abû 'Abdullâh Muḥammad b. Maḥbûb first features in Omani affairs during 'Abd al-Malik's Imamate (207-26/823-41). It is reported that Abû Sufyân, his father, who more or less wound up the founding Ibâdî school in Basra, retired to Oman. If he did, it was probably around the start of 'Abd al-Malik's rule, by which time the Ibâdî state was well established.<sup>1</sup> During al-Wârith's Imamate both father and son were reported as being on the Hajj from Basra when news of the 'Abbasid general's defeat reached them, and neither features in Munîr b. al-Nayyir's list of

'*ulamâ*' that the Imam Ghassân should consult. In al-Wârith's time the leading figure in Basra had been the Hadrami, Wâ'il b. Ayyûb, but Abû Sufyân was fairly clearly in his Basran advisory role when he wrote to the Omanis and Hadramis concerning Hârûn b. al-Yamân's schism. That apparently was during Muhannâ's Imamate, since Hârûn reputedly addressed him in his response, but Crone and Zimmermann question this; the Imam's name is not in the letter, and furthermore al-Bisyâni<sup>2</sup> places the dispute in Ghassân's Imamate (192-207/808-23). That certainly make more sense both of Abû Sufyân's lifespan and the fact that while the '*ulamâ*' were inveighing against the Qadariyya and Murji'a schools flourishing at Sohar during 'Abd al-Malik's Imamate there is no mention of the Sha'biyya/Shu'aybiyya or Hârûn then being active.

Crone and Zimmermann also point out that the winding-up of the Ibâdi school did not necessarily mean a mass migration to Oman, and prominent Ibâdis went on living in Iraq. That is true, but the names given by Ibn al-Nadîm, Mas'ûdi and al-Ash'ari, do not feature in the (Wahbiyya) Ibâdi pantheon. The fact that Mas'ûdi mentions 'Abdullâh b. Yazîd al-Fazâri (though long since dead) indicates that his 'Kûfan' school had perhaps largely won out in Iraq, in the same way as it became influential (p.270) in the Nukkarite schism in North Africa and Andalus,<sup>3</sup> as also Yemen, where he took refuge. Be that as it may, the exodus from Basra should not be underestimated. Ibâdism had flourished in the Omani milieu, and the redevelopment of Sohar under Imamate control with its favourable tax regime would have encouraged many to come home. While Ibâdis were permitted to live abroad in regions under the rule of *jabâbira*, it was preferable to live where the true Muslim state flourished, and with the new boost to Sohar's trade brought about by the establishment of an Omani navy the Omani merchants could probably better operate from there than Basra, which was merely one of the termini for growing international maritime trade. Furthermore, after 'Isa b. Ja'far's murder Iraq could hardly have been welcoming territory for those suspected of Ibâdi sympathies. Later, during al-Şalt's Imamate, the great Zanj revolt (255-70/869-83) made Basra a most unsafe place, and led to a mass exodus at the time of its siege and capitulation (257/881), although that can hardly be invoked as cause for Abû Sufyân's departure.

No, the essential reason the Ibâdi community more or less packed up was that major Imamates had now been established in Oman and the Maghrib, and a lesser one in Hadramawt. There was no further essential function for the Ibâdi school to perform, *a fortiori* once the proper rule of Ibâdi law and order had been established. And that was a very good reason for Abû Sufyân's son, and perhaps even himself, to go to Oman.

#### Relations with the Omanis

The first mention of Abû 'Abdullâh in Oman occurs over the problem of the fight between two Jews, one of whom converted to Islam in 'Abd al-Malik's time (see previous chapter). The Soharis had first gone to Sumâyil to get Hâshim b. Ghaylân's opinion, but the Wali now referred it to the Imam, who convened various '*ulamâ*', including Abû 'Abdullâh, who opined that the conversion had not been complete unless he had pronounced the *shahâda* (which is what the Qadi Mûsâ b. 'Ali decreed).

But he really came to the fore in Muhannâ's Imamate, by which time his father was dead and he was sufficiently established to carry weight with the old conservative regime. It was now that he found himself in dispute with Mûsâ b. 'Ali; was confronted by the Omani '*ulamâ*' over the issue



of the Creation of the Qur'ân; took the lead in objecting to Muhannâ's increasingly tyrannical rule; and finally forced acceptance of his own candidate, al-Şalt b. Mâlik al-Kharûşi, as his successor. Thus, in **(p.271)** his first phase in which he made his presence felt in Oman it was essentially in conflict with the existing regime, and it was not until al-Şalt appointed him qadi at Sohar in 249/863 that he really features as the dominant *faqîh* who brought a new order to legal affairs, particularly concerning the economic life of the great port and its trade.

It is pretty clear that the Omani '*ulamâ*' resented Abû 'Abdullâh, and that in part was because he was a foreigner, and they let him know it (for the family origins, see Chapter 6). Such parochialism need not surprise us, for they were generally mistrustful of relatively cosmopolitan Basra. Certainly the '*ilm*' came from there, but it is noteworthy that in Munîr's letter the only names he mentions as guides for the Imam Ghassân, and there are plenty of them, are all Omani. The Basrans might comment on affairs, but there is no sign that the Omanis took much notice, once their Imamate had been established. It was the B. Sâma Imam-makers and the likes of Hâshim b. Ghaylân who decreed. The early Ibâdis lived in the tribal interior of their insular state, and even Sohar was suspect. Al-Rabî' was fine—at least he was an Omani—but Abû Sufyân: he was a Basran, and he went on being described as al-Qurashi al-Başri, even as late as Qalhâti. And they were totally opposed to anything that smacked of Qadarism, Murji'ism, or Mu'tazilism.

#### The Damâ debate

This resentment and mistrust was most clearly brought out in the debate that took place at Damâ during Muhannâ's Imamate to discuss the issue of the Created Qur'ân, which according to al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥawâri, Abû 'Abdullâh had been propounding. Those participating included Sa'îd b. Muhriz, Abû Ziyâd (al-Waḍḍaḥ b. 'Uqba),<sup>4</sup> and Muḥammad b. Hâshim b. Ghaylân.

All were Omanis with an established family position as '*ulamâ*'. Abû Ja'far Sa'îd b. Muhriz from Nizwâ was an old-timer going back to the start of the Imamate, and it was from him that Abû 'Abdullâh learnt of the attempts to reconcile the Imam al-Wârith with Sa'îd b. Ziyâd al-Bakri and how the Omanis had consulted Wâ'il b. Ayyûb in Basra: his sons were also distinguished '*ulama*'. Abû Ziyâd similarly went well back and, like his father, was involved in the early days of the Imamate. He too features as recording early Omani Ibâdi tradition, and is the source for what went on at Ghassân's election and, through intermediaries, the story of how 'Abd al-'Azîz al-Julandâni was assassinated, back in Abû 'Ubayda and Ḥâjib's time; and it was he and his son who probably recorded Mûsâ b. **(p.272)** 'Ali's judgements. Muḥammad, like his brother 'Abd al-Malik, was a distinguished '*âlim*', whose father Hâshim b. Ghaylân had been a leading pupil of Mûsâ b. Abi Jâbir and to the fore after the Battle of Majâza. Hâshim came from Sîjâ and consequently became the main person referred to in the Sumâyil area and the Batina coast. He was closely associated with a clutch of '*ulamâ*' at Izki, at that time perhaps even more important than Nizwâ as a centre of Ibâdism,<sup>5</sup> with whom he wrote long letters of advice to the Imam 'Abd al-Malik, instructing him to do something about the Qadariyya and Murji'a doctrines being propagated from Sohar and which were spreading into the interior via Tuwâm. Matters had probably come to a head when the Soharis consulted him about good and evil deeds and how they would be accounted for. Hâshim, clearly exasperated by such uninitiated theological debate based upon Qadari premises, sharply told them to stop discussing the matter,<sup>6</sup> echoing Ḥâjib

---

and Abû 'Ubayda's reactions sixty or so years earlier. Hâshim had most probably died by the time of the Qur'ân debate, but his pompous son Muḥammad obviously considered himself as the man to uphold the infallibility of Omani tradition.

So after Abû 'Abdullâh had expressed his opinion at the Damâ meeting, Muḥammad b. Hâshim huffed and puffed that he was not going to stay in the same country as a man who held such views. To which Abû 'Abdullâh, knowing he was being got at, replied that it was he who should leave, since he was the foreigner: whereupon Muḥammad stormed out of the house. Obviously propitiating words were said by the other two. So at the next meeting Abû 'Abdullâh withdrew his opinion and they all finally agreed that God had created all things and what he made (*sawâ*) was created, in other words, he had created the Qur'ân. Which was an old argument, and one used by Abû Ḥanifa (d. 150/767), that sidestepped what was really at issue. They also added that the Qur'ân was the word of God, His inspiration (*waḥâ*), His book, and His revelation (*tanzîl*) to Muḥammad; which is what in fact Abû 'Abdullâh had been saying earlier.

### The Creation of the Qur'ân<sup>7</sup>

The issue had surfaced somewhat earlier, at least during Mûsâ b. 'Ali's time, and since he did not participate in the Damâ debate it may be (p.273) presumed that the meeting took place after his death (230 or 231/844-5).<sup>8</sup> Abû 'Abdullâh's views were probably a lot more subtle than the way al-Faḍl presents them, and if by then he had come down bluntly in favour of the creationist theory then he had changed his mind, for the *K. al-Taqyîd*, which devotes a long section to the subject (pp. 27-9), shows that his views were much closer to the traditionalist approach.<sup>9</sup>

In part this dispute represented the importation from Basra of dangerous ideas, strongly tainted with Mu'tazilism, which the old guard in Oman were rejecting. Furthermore, it was dogma that was being imposed by the 'Abbasid Caliphs, arguably so as to enhance caliphal religious authority.<sup>10</sup> Apart from the Jahmiyya, no one, including the Mu'tazila, denied that the Qur'ân was the Word of God. In so far as there had been debate, it focused on this issue and not on whether or not it was created, and it had more or less been subsumed by the early mainline theologians that it was eternal, uncreated, and subsisting *min qadîm*, and that *kalâm* was an attribute (*ṣifa*) of God's essence which He expressed as and when He saw fit. That seems to have represented early Ibâḍî views also. The situation is partially clarified in a reply of the Iraqi Abû Şufra 'Abd al-Malik b. Şufra (see Chapter 6) to Abû Sufyân's sons who were obviously trying to establish the Ibâḍî line.<sup>11</sup> He starts by saying, I have never heard any of our *aşḥâb* say the Qur'ân was created, they say it is the word (*kalâm*) of God. He had been to Baghdad to talk with various people, including Abû 'Abdullâh Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Ḥumayd al-Baḥrani and Ja'far (?) b. Yaḥyâ b. al-Rabî' (b. *akhy abi al-'azîz* = al-Rabî's grandson?), who reported the view of one 'Âdil b. Yazîd/Zayd that it was created. So he asked Abû Muḥammad 'Abdullâh b. 'Arwas (sp.?), one of the leading Ibâḍîs in Baghdad who had known al-Rabî', and he too said he had never heard the issue discussed. Furthermore, Abû Şufra clarified misunderstandings about what Abû 'Ali Mûsâ b. 'Ali had said and that he too held it was the Word of God. However, it was not an issue to go to the hilt over; Abû Sufyân said that to dissociate (*barâ'a*) from someone in *walâya* who maintained the Qur'ân was created was tantamount to condemning him to death (*qatalahu*).

---

So Abû 'Abdullâh and most of the main Ibâdis held that the Qur'ân was the Word of God, but would not pronounce on whether it was created **(p.274)** or uncreated.<sup>12</sup> It was the Mu'tazila, who totally rejected the notion of anything being coeternal with God and any literal interpretation of anthropomorphic terms in the Qur'ân (the Ibâdis concurred), who had brought the created Qur'ân thesis to the fore. Their views highlighted the temporal dimension, and distinguished between the eternal nature of God and his acts, so that uncreated (*ghayr makhlûq*), which was what most of the early traditionalists held if pushed to pronounce, implied eternal (*qadîm*), and created as having come into existence in time (*hâdith*). The most extreme opponent of the Created Qur'ân thesis was Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855), who put the blame on the Jahmiyya for starting the debate. That goes back to the first quarter of the second century when al-Ja'd b. Dirhâm<sup>13</sup> (who was executed during the reign of Hishâm for his heretical views), and Jahm b. Ṣafwân (killed 128/745) stripped (ta' *tîl*) God of all human attributes, including His speech. While rejecting their notion that God has never 'spoken' (to Moses or anyone else), the Mu'tazila did hold that God had created his speech to communicate his law to man and hence the Qur'ân was created. Perhaps more significant, as shown by Madelung, is the fact that Abû Ḥanîfa had, at least during part of his career, taught that the Qur'ân was created (though not on the grounds of the Jahmiyya), and that this had led to serious argument amongst his followers, his teacher even denouncing him as a *mushrik*. Furthermore, Abû Ḥanîfa himself states that he had been to Basra twenty or more times and had debated with Khâriji groups like the Ṣufri and Ibâdis.<sup>14</sup> So it is possible, as Cuperly suggests,<sup>15</sup> that if not actually initiating the debate, Ibâdi circles in Kûfa and Basra had discussed it in the first half of the 2/8<sup>th</sup> century. But as Abû Ṣufra shows, the Ibâdis, like most of the other theologians, did not consider it a central issue, and it is unlikely that it was one of the causes of the dissensions amongst al-Rabî's pupils, as Cuperly also suggests.

Be that as it may, it was a debate that had developed in Iraq and it was the Mu'tazila who had shifted the emphasis from the speech dimension to that of time and creation. The crisis arose when the Caliph al-Ma'mûn (d. 218/833), himself well versed in *fiqh* and influenced by Ḥanafî doctrine and the Ḥanafî Jahmi, Bishr al-Marîsi (d. 218/833), who also had Murji'ite tendencies,<sup>16</sup> introduced the *miḥna* at the end of his life, naming seven to examine the thesis. All agreed the Qur'ân had been created. Ibn Ḥanbal resisted, and whilst trying to avoid the temporal dimension aspect, was forced in the end to admit that uncreated (*ghayr makhlûq*) implied *qadîm*, coeternal with God. After the created thesis **(p.275)** became official dogma others found it advisable to follow suit, particularly after he was flogged for refuting it. Behind Ma'mûn's thinking, at least from a theological point of view, was that it was odious to put God and the Qur'ân at the same level; it was like the Christians who claimed that Jesus was not created because he is the Word of God, an argument adopted also by the Ibâdi Rustamid Imam Abû'l-Yaqzan (see below). That not only shows awareness of the first verse of St John, and the congruence between *logos* and *kalâm*, but a more fundamental debate. For the Jews the Torah was the link between the Creator and the created, for the Christians it was that between the Father and the Son. In the view as developed by Arius, the Son by definition was subordinate to the Father, a dogma that severely divided the early Christians and which Constantine tried to settle at Nicaea (325 AD), where the dogma that the Son was co-substantial with the Father was imposed. But it was by no means the end of the dispute, and it was not until later that the 'Orthodox' view emerged as generally

triumphant. Like Sunni-Ash'ari Orthodoxy, it only evolved in reaction to 'heresies': that is, what others 'chose'.

Thus the issue of the Created Qur'ân reflected something of the same debate, whether God's laws (cf. the Torah) were, like the Son, created in time or co-substantial with the Eternal. The *miḥna* in some ways reflected the Arian view and was itself at one stage the 'right opinion', the effort to settle once and for all the debate, rather like the official view propounded at Nicaea. So although Ma'mûn was opposed to Mu'tazili views concerning *qadar*, he had been strongly influenced by their early teaching that the Qur'ân should be the only basis for a system of religious doctrine, and mistrusted the growing *ḥadīth* cult and legal arguments based on traditions. Since the Caliph's ideas generally accorded with the Muḥakkima tradition and Ibâḍi dogma, they may well have been influenced to accept the official creationist doctrine, the new 'Orthodoxy', even if not the possible political reasons behind it.

This 'testing' procedure was followed by Ma'mûn's two successors, the chief inquisitor being Ma'mûn's close confidant the judge Aḥmad b. Abi Du'âd (c. 160/776–249/854),<sup>17</sup> now *qâḍi al-quḍât* and himself a Basran Mu'tazili. But the wind changed with the accession of al-Mutawakkil (232–47/847–61), who ended the *miḥna* between 234 and 237; Ibn Abû Du'âd and his son were disgraced and Mu'tazilism discredited. That 'brought to a decisive end any notion of a caliphal role in the definition of Islam and it permitted the unchecked development of what in due course would become recognizable as Sunnism'. That in turn coincides with the first real traces of recording *isnads* among the Basran Ibâḍi school, the **(p.276)** preliminary step which finally led 300 years later to the production of the Ibâḍi *ḥadīth* collection.

It will be observed that the Omani debate occurred during Muḥannâ's Imamate, which cut across the period when the *miḥna* was still being vigorously pursued, and its disavowal. That at least poses the question of whether Abû 'Abdullâh had been influenced by the current political dogma before he left Basra, for only the most courageous would have risked opposing the official line. But according to 'Amr, a son of the Sa'id b. Muḥriz who took part in the Damâ debate, the Word (*kalâm*) argument seems to have remained Abû 'Abdullâh's fundamental thesis. As Ibn Baraka later shows in his *Muwâzana* exposé, the issue essentially stemmed from the question of whether *kalâm* was *ṣifa dhât*, that is, integral with God essence, or one of his acts *ṣifa fâ'il*. That certainly clarified matters, for according to Ibn Baraka the former were eternal (*qadîm*) and the latter not.<sup>18</sup> I am not clear how far this distinction had taken root among the Ibâḍis by Abû 'Abdullâh's time, at least amongst the Mashriqis, although the notion that God's speech was *fi'l* and not *dhât* was basic to the Maghribi Ibâḍis' argument that the Qur'ân was *makhlûq, muḥdath*.<sup>19</sup> Certainly the 'maverick' al-Fazâri, whom Abû 'Ubayda expelled from Ibâḍi circles, appears to have discussed certain relevant concepts, possibly under the influence of his friend Hishâm b. al-Ḥakam: by considering the Qur'ân a *jism* rather than an *'araḍ*, he underscored that man had no part in its making.<sup>20</sup> But I have the impression that the mainline Mashriqi Ibâḍis, or at least the Omanis, for long did not recognize any division of *ṣifât*, considering them an integral part of God's essence and thus eternal (whence, in due course, fulminations against the '*ṣifâtiyya*', i.e. the Sunnis). In this they were perhaps conforming to Mu'tazili views that the very notion of divine attributes was inconsistent with His essential unity. Abû'l-Mu'thir does not make such a distinction,<sup>21</sup> and the first Omani to do so that I have

---

found is Abû 'Abdullâh's son Bashîr, in the *K. al-Rasf* (under his treatment of *tawhîd*); and again in a quote in the *K. al-Taqyîd* (p. 277), where he raises the question of whether *walâya* and *barâ'a* were of the *şifât al-fi'l* or *şifât al-dhât* (the answer is disputed). Even so, Bashîr seems only to be demonstrating an awareness of the distinction, and it does not appear as a central concept for his theology.

That Abû 'Abdullâh also did not divide the *şifât* is indicated by an interesting, but unfortunately defective, passage in the *K. al-Taqyîd* (pp. 277-9), where he maintained that God's names and qualities are from **(p.277)** His essence, and that is timeless. That appears to be his view in the Qur'ân debate also, when we find him sticking to the argument that it was the word of God in its own right (*al-kalâm bi nafsîhi*). One does not say the names of God are in time (*asmâ' Allâh muhðatha*) but timeless. One does not say it is He or not Him, nor a thing from Him, nor created. The Qur'ân is the word of God, His inspiration (*wahâ*), His book, and His revelation (*tanzîl*) to Muḥammad, for the Qur'ân is the 'ilm of God and his 'ilm is eternal (*lâ yuzâl*) and not of time (*maḥðûth*).<sup>22</sup> This seems to be essentially the traditionalist view, for we see Ibn Ḥanbal quoting approvingly the Shi'i Imam Ja'far al-Şâdiq (d. 148/765) that the Qur'ân is neither creator (*khâliq*) nor created, and also stating that the Qur'ân is part of the 'ilm of God, and hence uncreated.

But in my opinion the Omanis twisted Abû 'Abdullâh's opinions by forcing him, as Ibn Ḥanbal had also been compelled, to pronounce on a simple yes-no basis, and in the end he came down on the Mu'tazili side. If that is the case then the nub of the argument was whether what God created was in time, and that as we have seen from Abû'l-Mu'thir in his exposé on *tawhîd* seems to have been the view of the Mashriqî Ibâḍis. It was a view that became refined in later Sunni theological debate. In Ash'arite argumentation, the Qur'ân was not created although contingent in time, an 'illogicality', the Nafûsan Tibghûrîn (first half 6/12<sup>th</sup> century) maintained, rather like that of the Mu'tazila, who held that man's acts were in time, albeit not created.<sup>23</sup>

#### Mu'tazili influence

But that need not concern us here. What is clear is that at this stage Ibâḍism was without doubt influenced by Mu'tazili ideas, but it is difficult to work out how far. Abû'l-Mu'thir certainly names them as one of the dissident groupings, but in so far as he seems to have any specific reproaches it is with respect to Qadari influences, and it is under this subject that he treats as abominable the tenet that what is good comes from God and what is evil from His creatures.<sup>24</sup> This notion was rejected right back in the time of Ḥâjib and Abû 'Ubayda, but the reasons for doing so were not very sophisticated. Abû 'Abdullâh is explicit,<sup>25</sup> arguing that God created a thing and its opposite, right and wrong, true and erroneous guidance, justice and injustice, light and darkness, belief and **(p.278)** disbelief (*al-şalâḥ wa'l-fasâd, al-hudâ wa'l-ðalâl, al-'adl wa'l-jawr, al-nûr wa'l-ðulâm, al-kufr wa'l-iyman*). You cannot say *al-şalâḥ* is from him but not *al-fasâd*, and so on. These are all part of his creation, not *şifât* nor *asmâ'*; one does not say God is corrupt nor attribute evil names to Him.

The philosophy behind this is exposed by his son Bashîr in the *K. al-Rasf wa hudûth al-'âlam*, perhaps the earliest Omani treatise on *kalâm*. In a long discourse, which is strongly Mu'tazili in its fundamental conception on how to decide (*tafsîr*) between *ma'lûm* and *majhûl*, he presents

---

them as twinned opposites, one true, the other false, and states that they are like the *şifât*: the image and its reflection (*al-şuwar wa'l-hay'ât*), stillness and movement, black and white, and so on, and *al-jawhar wa'l-a' râd*. He has a major parenthesis concerning this last pairing, the whole and its parts (using the roots *jmđ* and *frq*), which are indissoluble, inseparable in time (before or after their existence), each a guide to itself and to the other. Thus he divides *đilm* into two forms, a wrong one deriving from *hiss* (human perception) and a right one *qiyâs*, in which the guidance comes from what God has decreed. In this he briefly mentions the notion of *iktisâb*, a gift from God, which as shown in Chapter 7, his contemporary, Abû'l-Mu'thir develops fairly fully. To some extent this sounds like Ash'arism before its time. Bashîr's *floruit* was in the third quarter of the 3/9<sup>th</sup> century, while the Basran al-Ash'ari's conversion from Mu'tazilism is traditionally dated to 300. However, although it is convenient to see him as a turning-point in Sunni theology, he was a pupil of al-Jubbâ'i<sup>26</sup> who was teaching post al-Mutawakkil and already veering towards the sorts of compromise al-Ash'ari developed. Al-Ash'ari himself in the *Maqâlât* states that the difference of opinion of Đirâr b. 'Amr (c. 110–200/728–815, see below) with the Mu'tazila was his view that the acts of men are created, and that one deed comes from two doers: He who creates it, God, while the other, man, acquires it (*iktasaba*). As Montgomery Watt has shown, that notion was fairly widespread early on, but he may be wrong when he says that Shahrastâni was retrojecting views of his own time by stating that the Khârîji Shu'aybiyya (this is not the Ibâđi Shu'aybiyya, cf. Chapter 7) held that 'God is the creator of the acts of man and that man is the acquirer'.<sup>27</sup> So it was an old concept, and perhaps more widespread among the 'Khawârij' than just the Shu'aybiyya. In any case, in so far as Bashîr was being influenced by others, it was by al-Jubbâ'i, and despite rejecting certain aspects of Mu'tazili doctrine, it was still, in various forms, the dominant external influence in Ibâđi theology. This is again evident in Bashîr's *K. al-Muḥâraba*, where in his treatment of 'amr bi'l-ma'rûf, itself one of the five pillars of Mu'tazilism and an obligation which corresponds with the notion that faith is both words and deeds, he (p.279) considers it may be treated with 'aql and not just *sam'*. As too, when in his treatment of *al-munkar*, where he recognizes a distinction between *al-'aqliyât* and *shar'iyât*, that deriving from 'aql, inferred knowledge, and that from the *sharî'a*, revealed knowledge.

So although this idea of God creating a thing and its opposite might appear as a partial rebuttal to Qadarite-cum-late Mu'tazili views that God's will and guidance was for the good and that He did not create man's acts, the need to underline His unity and that He created both good and evil may also have led Abû 'Abdullâh to believe finally that since His speech was not a *şifa* nor an *ism*, intrinsic timeless characteristics of the Almighty, it belonged to the category of what he created, the guidance revealed for the believers. In other words, the Qur'ân was an originated act (*muḥdath*) and not timeless; that is, if one held the view that what God created was in time. Which is why the Damâ debate report passed to the Imam Muhannâ used Abû 'Abdullâh's words about His inspiration, His book, His revelation but not the rest of the original phrase about timelessness. It was a compromise, but they nevertheless instructed the Imam to deal severely with anyone who (positively) preached that the Qur'ân was created.

Eventually the Omanis did pay lip service to the Created Qur'ân thesis, thus avoiding being at variance with the Maghribis who were fairly strongly affected by Mu'tazili thinking and heartily endorsed the creation thesis. Interestingly enough, it was the Imam Abû'l-Yaqzan Muḥammad b.

Aflah (d. 281/895) who wrote a *Risâla* that assembled all the main arguments on the subject and which for long remained the definitive work in the Maghrib.<sup>28</sup> His background may help explain this strong partisanship. Having obtained permission from his father Aflah to go on the Hajj, he was arrested by the 'Abbasid authorities who suspected he had been sent to raise a rebellion. According to Ibn Şaghîr, he was incarcerated in Baghdad with the Caliph's brother, with whom he struck up a close friendship. After the Caliph was killed, his brother succeeded and released him, renewing his pension but keeping him under the watchful eye of the vizier. Eventually Abû'l-Yaqzan got permission to return home to find Aflah had died and his own brother, Abû Bakr, had succeeded. Leaving him in post, Abû'l-Yaqzan gradually took control of government, establishing an administration based on the Baghdad model. For reasons that are discussed in Chapter 12, Tahert was soon plunged into a long civil war in which Abû'l-Yaqzan, with the support of the Nafûsans, managed to organize a truce and finally establish his government, which lasted forty years.

All this is difficult to evaluate, but the story of the sojourn in Iraq was **(p.280)** apparently given to Ibn Şaghîr<sup>29</sup> by an informant whose father claims to have had it from the horse's mouth. It is fairly clear that Abû'l-Yaqzan was originally treated as an honoured hostage for the good behaviour of his father, who died in 258/872, while the assassinated Caliph is obviously al-Mutawakkil (d. 247/861), though which of his sons and nephews who rapidly succeeded him is designated as his 'brother' is not clear. Quite likely al-Mu'tamid, who ruled 256-79/870-92, but whose grey eminence (probably the vizier referred to) was his brother al-Muwaffaq (whose own son Mu'ta'id finally succeeded and put an end to these disturbed times). How long Abû'l-Yaqzan stayed in the Mashriq is anyone's guess, but the permission to return home was clearly based on the hope that the Ibâdis would be reconciled with the Caliphate authority, a hope aborted by the Tahert civil war. Living probably more under house arrest than actual incarceration, Abû'l-Yaqzan had obviously been strongly influenced by the theological debates in Iraq and almost certainly composed this *Risâla*<sup>30</sup> while in the Mashriq, and it was perhaps from Iraq that he wrote to the Omanis expressing his views.

So the Damâ debate did not really close the issue and the old-school Omanis, like the highly respected 'Azzân b. al-Şaqr, continued to refute the created Qur'ân thesis.<sup>31</sup> But as Abû Sufyân had said, it was not a matter to go to extremes over, and Abû 'Abdullâh did no more than *waqaf* from those who disagreed with him. Similarly, al-Faql, who is our source for the Damâ story and is clearly a 'creationist', says there is no question of *barâ'a: walâya* should be given to those who maintain the created thesis but *walâya* does not lapse because of holding the opposing view. Indeed, the debate does not really seem to have been settled until fairly modern times, for the revered Omani Ibn al-Nazar (6/12<sup>th</sup> century) wrote a *qaşîda* defending the eternity of the Qur'ân,<sup>32</sup> which Aţfiyyash refutes in his *sharh* on the author's great *Da'â'im*, even implying that it was faked (despite confirming statements in Ibâdi works from around the period that indicate it was genuine).<sup>33</sup> And clearly it was a subject that went on being debated by the Ibâdis everywhere, for even as late as Abû Ya'qûb al-Warjîlânî (6/12<sup>th</sup> century) we find him asking Aḥmad al-Ḥaḍramî for the views of his community.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, al-Sâlimî believes that it was not until the 8/14<sup>th</sup> century that the Omanis came round to the created thesis,<sup>35</sup> which he and Aţfiyyash re-expounded in the Mashriq and Maghrib at the **(p.281)** end of the nineteenth century. However, I suspect that had the early debate gone the other way our modern authors

---

could equally well have produced an exegesis that supported the uncreated thesis! In any case, the argument had long since become purely theological, removed from any historical context, and as such beyond the subject of this book. All we need note here is that it did represent one of the few significant Ibâdî departures from Sunni theological dogma and represents, like their interpretation concerning the vision of God, an element of Mu'tazili influence that was not extirpated.

### The Election of the Imam

Also possibly imported by Abû 'Abdullâh from Basra and partly influenced by Mu'tazili views was the form for electing the Imam by *shûrâ*. *Shûrâ* had long since been defined by Ḥâjib al-Ṭâ'iy (*Sîra*) as *ijtimâ' ahl al-ilm* derived from *Kitâb Allâh wa sunnat nabîyhi wa âthâr al-ṣâlihîn*, but as discussed in the previous chapter, the election or rather selection of the first Imams had been more or less imposed unilaterally. Only with the election of Abû 'Abdullâh's candidate, al-Ṣalt, did a recognizably fully consultative selection take place.

Van Ess has written a long article in the Supplement to the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* on al-Aṣamm (Abû Bakr 'Abd al-Raḥmân b. Kaysân, d. 200 or 201/815-16), a somewhat marginalized Mu'tazili theologian who had his own school at Basra and who frequented Ibâdî circles, even being described as *sâhib al-Ibâdiyya*. It is not his theological notions, however, that concern us here, but his ideas about the *imâma*. Theoretically, this was not a necessary institution, he held, since in the ideal community the universal knowledge of the Qur'ân should suffice to govern itself. But in reality it was, and the Imam could only be chosen by a consultative body, a *shûrâ*. Once chosen, however, the election was irreversible, even if someone more favourable (*afḍal*) subsequently appeared. Abû Bakr and 'Umar were the most suitable when chosen, but after 'Umar died 'Abd al-Raḥmân b. 'Awf was the most prominent (*afḍal*), as demonstrated by his renouncing in favour of the second choice, 'Uthmân. 'Ali, on the other hand, was not elected by a *shûrâ* and his government was therefore unrighteous; but that did not mean, *ipso facto*, that his acts were unlawful and they should be judged against the intentions of his opponents. Since these are unknown, judgement should be suspended in the case of Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr and the Ṣiffin affair, though he does pass some judgements on the various peoples involved.

However, al-Aṣamm also seems to have subscribed to the idea that in the absence of a properly selected Imam for the whole Muslim community (**p.282**) it was better to have local Imams, provided that they were legally elected by *shûrâ* and coordinated their efforts in righteousness, and that was the preferable solution for his own time. Al-Aṣamm also put his faith in the consensus of the '*ulamâ'* not to make false judgements, provided that they were sufficient in number not to agree on a lie. It is fairly easy for modern authors to see that the Ibâdîs may have stimulated his ideas, but it may well be a two-way relationship. While Mûsâ b. 'Ali decreed that the Imamate was a religious duty (*farîḍa*), 'as shown by the consensus of the *umma, muhâjirûn* and *anṣâr'*, his view may well reflect the fact that a properly constituted Muslim community had now been installed, and it is not to be assumed that it had always obtained. Amongst the 'Khârijî' schools, the Najdiyya<sup>36</sup> (and it appears the Nukkarites also) propounded the same view as al-Aṣamm, that in a perfect world an Imam would not be a necessity. But where they differed was over his view that the '*ulamâs* consensus was infallible; right from the beginning mistakes were made, as, for example, the *Anṣâr's* choice of Sa'd b. 'Ubâda, or that 'Ali withheld allegiance to

---



Abû Bakr. So, in the early Omani Imamate too, the idea of the infallibility of the *'ulamâ'* did not rank high, and Mûsâ, like his grandfather, ensured that it was he who selected the Imam; it was only in Abû 'Abdullâh's time that a proper electoral process first emerged. On the other hand, there was a more nuanced view concerning the role of the *'ulama'*, one that ran counter to the Najdiyya's objection that the Imam risked being overruled by the *mujtâhids*. While rejecting the Nukkarite requirement of a standing consultative committee, we find from the start the Omani Imam consulting over important rulings and, by al-Şalt's time at least, being overruled with no consequent undermining of his authority. Even so, there remained a potential tension between the Imam's authority and that of the *'ulamâ'*, and that became evident with Muhannâ. It was only resolved in the wake of al-Şalt's deposing, by the notion that an Imam could not be removed before being properly confronted by the *'ulamâ'* over his errors and given the chance to make amends with a genuine *tawba*. And the Ibâdis, as a result of al-Rabî's ruling concerning the Nukkarite dispute, also subscribed to al-Aşamm's opinion that, once a choice was made, there was no going back, even though a better man might emerge.

Also of a comparative interest is al-Aşamm's notion that several Imams might coexist, indeed that it was the preferable solution in the prevailing political state of the Islamic community. For the Ibâdis this features in discussion of the 'two Imams in a *mişr'* principle. It has already been shown that early on the Ibâdis acknowledged three areas in which Imams were automatically recognized as elected by the local (p.283) *'ulamâ'*, the Maghrib, Oman, and Hadramawt, and that other places like Basra or Khurâsân might only be recognized after careful enquiry. In the wake of the civil war in Oman this became important at the local level. So various rulings emerged that it was not permitted to have an Imam in Tuwâm and another in Sohar (essentially because they formed one province; see below), but if there were an Imam in Nizwâ but a Sultan at Sohar then it was permissible for the people of Ḥafit to have an Imam, so long as he was independent; but if the situation changed both Imamates lapsed and the Imams concerned selected an Imam.<sup>37</sup>

Another possible influence on the *imâma* institution is Ḍirâr b. 'Amr (c. 110–200/728–815),<sup>38</sup> a pupil of Wâşil from whom al-Aşamm took over the Mu'tazili school in Basra after Ḍirâr moved to Baghdad, although not always in agreement with his predecessor. Ḍirâr took part in the theological debates organized by Yaḥyâ b. Khâlid al-Barmaki, in which 'Abdullâh b. Yazîd al-Fazâri participated, along with his Kûfan business partner, Hishâm b. al-Ḥakam.<sup>39</sup> The latter was the most prominent representative of Imâmi (Shi'i) *kalâm* in the times of Ja'far al-Şâdiq and Mûsâ al-Kâzim, and the two maintained a close partnership despite their doctrinal differences. Ḍirâr did not believe that Quraysh had a monopoly over the Caliphate, any more than had earlier the Qadarite Ghaylân al-Dimashqî, who held that anyone who lives by the Qur'ân and the Sunna may be chosen. And the Ibâdis absolutely rejected Quraysh pretensions, as witness Shabîb b. 'Atiyya's *Sîra*. But Ḍirâr went further, claiming that a Nabataean who demonstrated true belief was preferable (*afḍal*), since he had to contend with the stigma that the Nabataeans had never produced a prophet, unlike privileged Quraysh, and furthermore had the additional advantage of not having a powerful clientele to keep content.

Such reasoning clearly influenced the selection of 'Abd al-Raḥmân b. Rustam, as Ibn Şaghîr indicates: he was a Persian (whether or not from the Sasanid family matters little, since he was

---

humble), had no particular local clientele, had been trained in Basra, and had proved himself as governor in Qayrawân. So when the Basran delegation came and saw how he organized his state, they recognized him, and he fulfilled his final duty by appointing a *shûrâ* to choose his successor. The fact that the process led to the Nukkarite dispute and the Tahert Imamate became dynastic is irrelevant to the theory, and it is to be noted that non-Ibâdî contemporaries emphasized the fact that the Ibâdîs (of the Maghrib) deliberately chose their Imam on this 'Nabataean' criterion. This was certainly not the case in Oman, and when Abû 'Abdullâh arrived he had to contend with **(p.284)** the precedents established by the Mûsâ b. Abi Jâbir family and the Omani '*ulamâ*', based on the realities of tribal power. In this connection we might note that the obvious choice for finding a candidate who had the qualities required and had had no powerful clientele to please was the Âl Ruḥayl family itself, who in the end did produce an Imam by general consensus among the '*ulamâ*' following the civil war (see chapter 12). But just as the Kindi missionary had to be dropped by Mûsâ, so the Ruḥayli Imam provides the exception that proved the rule, the Imam must be selected from those with strong tribal influence.

Once more, as in so much of this early development of the institution of the Imamate, it is difficult to know how far the Ibâdîs were reacting to notions elaborated by others, or initiating their own ideas. I am still inclined to the view that theirs was essentially an eclectic approach and early notions of the Imamate were largely developed by the intellectuals of other schools, adopted and modified on pragmatic grounds. It was only with the issue of 'Abd al-Raḥmân b. Rustam's succession in Tahert, a few years before the Omani Ibâdî success at Majâza, that the rules dealing with the election and powers of the Imam really began to crystallize. These were largely laid down by al-Rabî' and his Basran companions as a result of the Nukkarite dispute, and included the stipulation that no conditions may be imposed on the Imam, and once chosen he may not be replaced on the grounds that someone better (*afḍal*) had come along. In doing so, he may have had in mind the potential precedent set by the Umayyad Yazîd III, who accepted both the *shart* and *afḍal* clause when selected by his *shûrâ*, probably under Qadari influence. In any case, we can be fairly sure that Abû 'Abdullâh was fully *au fait* with the debate that led the Basrans to support 'Abd al-Wahhâb against the Nukkarites. It was almost certainly he who introduced more sophisticated concepts concerning the selection and powers of the Imam when he came to Oman, and this was reflected in his opposition to Muhannâ and his influence in having al-Ṣalt chosen as his successor.

Abû 'Abdullâh's advisory role: the Maghrib and Hadramawt

The fact is that Abû 'Abdullâh was intellectually on a different plane from the Omani '*ulamâ*', and that cannot always have endeared him to them, nor the fact that he treated his new homeland as a base to continue something of the central guiding role his father had played in Basra. The Khurâsânîs exchanged letters with him,<sup>40</sup> the Maghribis consulted him, and he was in correspondence with the Hadramis, either directly or via the Imam al-'alt, telling their Imam that like the Omanis they ought to be **(p.285)** on the path of *shirâ'* and invade Yemen.<sup>41</sup> He decreed how the Christians of Socotra were to be treated when al-Ṣalt mounted an expedition to repossess the island, and he had no hesitation in correcting his Imam after he decided not to rent out *ṣawâfi* land to a *majûsi*.<sup>42</sup>

The Maghribi letter<sup>43</sup> was written to a group of Ibâḍis from whom *zakât* was being claimed by a *soidisant* Imam who remitted it to a 'tyrannical' ruler. It is a very long and interesting exposé that covers a lot of ground, including what is permitted and what not in *kitmân* and *taqiyya*. It is also relevant to note that the three criteria Abû 'Abdullâh recognize are *al-Kitâb*, *al-Sunna* (not just the Prophet's, cf. Chapter 14), and *Âthâr al-Muslimîn*; the same old anonymous line of communal transmission which originally Jâbir had stipulated. But the essential argument being made is that not every *khurûj* can be called an *imâma*; one needs to know a great deal more about the person concerned before he is recognized. And here he repeats that there are only three areas where the *da'wa* is in *zuhûr*, the Maghrib, Oman, and Hadramawt. In these places the Imam can demand *walâya* and compel the *ḥaqq*. One cannot have divisions with one party saying we give *walâya* and the others saying *barâ'a*. It is the *khâṣṣ* who put forward an Imam, and once they agree, that is definitive (cf. Ḥajib's criteria). The universal Imamate of Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq aside, it is interesting to note that Abû 'Abdullâh seems only to recognize one Imam in the Maghrib before Ibn Rustam and his son 'Abd al-Wahhâb, Abû'l-Khaṭṭâb. Clearly Abû 'Abdullâh was writing to a group of Maghribis where the power of the Tahert Imamate was not fully established, probably somewhere in the Jabal Nafûsa where it seems that in the early days of the Rustamid Imamate certain leaders claimed to collect the taxes, but in order to keep the peace remitted them to Qayrawân.

### Hadramawt

However, it appears to be the relationship of Oman and Hadramawt that raised the issue of one Imam in a *miṣr* in the early days. Theoretically, under the circumstance of two *miṣrs* joining up, there should be a *shûrâ*, and if one or other Imam is chosen he is recognized by the other; if neither is selected then they accept whoever is. It is in this context that Abû 'Abdullâh states that he had it from his father, who in turn had been told by some of 'our shaikhs' that the title *Amîr al-Mu'minîn* can only be used when all the Muslims in all the *amṣâr* are joined together in a single rule. Thus there seem to be periods when the Hadramis did recognize the Omani Imam, both during the First Imamate and again in the Second, **(p.286)** when Abû Ishâq Ibrâhîm b. Qays recognized two Omani Imams before breaking away (see Chapter 13).

In the early period of Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq and al-Julandâ b. Mas'ûd southern Arabia was very much an active part of the Ibâḍi front and the *shurât* from this region occupied Socotra (see below). What happened then is not clear: the late Maghribi source, al-Barrâdi,<sup>44</sup> writes of a revolt against the 'Abbasids by the Omani al-Kulandâ b. Julandâ extending to Yemen, but I have grave doubts about this. In Basra the Hadramis were prominent, as too in the early days in North Africa: as well as those already cited, there was a distinguished Hadrami pupil of Abû 'Ubayda, Abû'l-Muhâjir Hâshim b. Abi'-Muhâjir, settled in Kûfa, while Abû Muḥammad al-Nahdi may also have been a Hadrami of Hamdâni origins.<sup>45</sup> But the situation in Hadramawt itself is confused.

From the report of a visit made by a non-Ibâḍi Basran at their invitation around 318/930,<sup>46</sup> it is clear that the core of the Hadrami Ibâḍi community then was small and in the Wadi Da'wan (at al-Jubayl?), which confirms Hamdâni's reports that their core area was the Kinda territory incorporating the Wadi Da'wan; yet Mas'ûdi says that in 332/943-4 virtually the whole Hadramawt population was Ibâḍi (and doctrinally in complete agreement with the Omanis).<sup>47</sup> From this core it periodically expanded to incorporate the coastal region, essential for Hadrami

---

commerce (as in Oman), and it is then that it constituted an Imamate. After Ma'n b. Zâ'ida's rule of terror, Lewicki speaks of a new period of shortlived 'Abbasid domination around 235/849, that is, during Muhannâ's Imamate, and it may be then that the Hadramis elected their own Imam in order to fight the occupant. So during Abû 'Abdullâh's time, at any rate, an Omani could discharge his *zakât* duties to the poor at al-Shiḥr or Yemen (by which is probably meant southern Arabia), indicating that the coast and its main port perhaps formed part of the Hadrami Imamate, or at least quasi-independent of any Caliphate government authority. That would make sense of the letter Abû 'Abdullâh and the Imam al-Ṣalt wrote to the Hadrami Imam Aḥmad b. Sulaymân. I have only seen extracts of this in the *Bayân al-Shar'* and *Muṣannaf*, but it is probably the same as the *sîra* briefly described by Al-Salmi (*Thesis*, no. 1). If so, it discusses a split in the local Ibâḍi community, resulting from the Imam abandoning *jihâd* and the Friday central prayer, and selling the military equipment. He is exhorted to the path of *shirâ'* and to lead expeditions to Yemen to establish justice, extinguish tyranny (*al-jawr*), and so on. That is pretty hard on the poor Hadramis, who had suffered far more than the Omanis ever had, **(p. 287)** massacred by Busr b. Arṭâh at the beginning of Umayyad times and again by Ma'n b. Zâ'ida when the 'Abbasid Caliphate was established. The implication is that the Imams were *difâ'i*, that is, defensive Imams (see Chapter 12), and there was clearly a party calling for *shirâ'*. Abû 'Abdullâh also wrote to the Hadramis warning them it was a grave error to depose an Imam unless he had done something that was considered a serious misdemeanour (*illâ bi ḥadath yakfir bihi*) and had failed to make a repentance (*tawba*);<sup>48</sup> which also seems to indicate that affairs were in something of a turmoil there. Things seem to have improved, for al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥawâri had it from Abû 'Abdullâh that the Imam Sulaymân b. 'Abd al-'Azîz was amongst the best of the Hadrami Imams and reputedly spent 100,000 dirhams in his fight to establish just rule. It was he who reproached the Omanis over the issues of the Julandâ feud, dynastic succession, and not permitting *nabîdh*.<sup>49</sup>

It is interesting that it is not until after the time of the Omani civil war that Abû'l-Ḥawâri attempted to reply to these accusations. The fact that his *Sîra* is addressed not to an Imam but a group of '*ulamâ'*' (six names specified) indicates that the Imamate had lapsed there too. During the time when the Second Omani Imamate was restored in the first half of the 5/11<sup>th</sup> century, Abû Ishâq Ibrâhîm b. Qays al-Hamdâni also led an active campaign both in the Yemen and overseas with Omani support, and recognized their Imams until the decree declaring Rustaq dogma official led him to break away and establish himself as an independent *shâri* Imam (see Chapter 12).

### Moderation: Wuqûf

From the point of view of *fiqh*, the Omanis were conservative. They were fundamentalists of the Muḥakimma school: the Qur'ân and nothing but the Qur'ân. One is reminded of Calvin's 'My Mass: here it is. The Bible, and I want no other.' Things had to be cut and dried, as shown by Mûsâ b. Abi Jâbir over Shabîb: it was either *barâ'a* or *walâya*. Abû 'Abdullâh, on the other hand, was sophisticated, a pragmatist and a superb jurist. So his moderation in making judgements was highly suspect for the old-style Omanis and smacked of Mu'tazilism. For example, Abû 'Abdullâh considered that perspicacity was an essential quality of a good '*âlim*, *a fortiori* Imam (*yu'amm al-baṣar fî'l-farîda*), whereas Mûsâ b. 'Ali did not.<sup>50</sup> **(p.288)** The law was the law: what God decrees, good is good and bad is bad. Interpretations through human reasoning or morality

---

were not permitted. There was no *manzila bayn al-manzilatayn*; either one was a Muslim or a *munâfiq* and condemned in the afterlife to everlasting hell. There was no redemption. Mu'tazilism was neither one thing nor the other, which is why later al-Ash'ari calls the Mu'tazila *makhânith al-Khawârij*, they want it both ways, to condemn the sinner to eternal fire without attaching the label of *kufr*.

Abû 'Abdullâh did not differ in such fundamentals, but in their application. Nowhere is the distinction better brought out than in the issue of *wuqûf*. It is illustrated by a basic problem which early posed itself: if someone in *walâya* kills another also in *walâya*, what position should be taken? The opinion of Shabîb b. 'Aṭiyya and Mûsâ b. 'Ali was: I give *walâya* to both until it has been proved which the guilty party is. Mûsâ b. Abi Jâbir's solution was to give *walâya* to the one killed and to dissociate from the killer until proved that he was rightly killed. Abû 'Abdullâh's response was *wuqûf* from both until the truth is known.<sup>51</sup> Which, incidentally, is why, when 'Abd al-Jabbâr b. Qays al-Murâdi and al-Ḥârith b. Talîd al-Ḥaḍrami killed each other, Abû 'Ubayda and Ḥâjib instructed the Maghribis that both should be held in *wuqûf*. And it is also worth noting that Abû 'Abdullâh caused some furore by considering that 'Ali's sons Ḥasan and Ḥusayn were in *wuqûf*.<sup>52</sup>

Abû 'Abdullâh's approach is elaborated by Abû Sa'îd al-Kudami, the leading proponent of the moderate Nizwâ school after the civil war, as follows:

If there are two Imams in a single *miṣr* opposed to and fighting one another there is no doubt that one and probably both are false ... Now according to our understanding of Abû 'Abdullâh Muḥammad b. Maḥbûb's views, where there are opposed groups/imams and the rights and wrongs of the situation are not known, then there are three dicta to be considered, *walâya*, *barâ'a*, and *wuqûf*. And as we understand him, *barâ'a* is anomalous in just the same way as *walâya* must be. So where *walâya* has been previously given to both, then in the view of worthy jurists the best ruling is *wuqûf* from them ... for *wuqûf* is applicable only where there is equivocation, legal doubt, or doubts...

The concept of *wuqûf* was of itself not new. It is a position of suspending judgement pending investigation or clarification, and it may be permanent or temporary. The Ibâḍis held al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri in *wuqûf*. This is a permanent status. An example of a temporary status is illustrated by the **(p.289)** gloss of Muḥammad b. 'Abdullâh b. Maddâd (16<sup>th</sup> century) to Abû Sa'îd al-Kudami's *Jâmi' al-Mufîd* concerning the case of 'Uways al-Qarni: he says he was not sure whether he had been a supporter of 'Uthmân until he found in a Maghribi (Ibâḍi) book that he was in *walâya* and killed at Nahrawân. But he goes on to say that while Abû Sa'îd [al-Kudami] suspended judgement over al-Ṣalt b. Mâlik, his *tawba* (repentance) was confirmed (*ṣaḥḥ*) and therefore without question he was in *walâya*.<sup>53</sup> In other words, he is still holding to the Rustâq party dogma and rejecting the Nizwân.

That debate really arises from a major development of *wuqûf* that came in the aftermath of al-Ṣalt's deposing, but it does illustrate why the early Omani Ibâḍis mistrusted it. It was an indecisive status, and as such to be used with the utmost caution. The danger, as we have seen, is that the word had replaced *irjâ'*, and that when the proto-Mu'tazili Wâṣil adopted it (in effect,

if not the underlying rationale), it was for similar reasons to the Murji'ites, to suspend judgement concerning the first *fitna*, over which the Ibâḍis had most clearly made up their minds. *Wuqûf* in that case was very much associated with the heresy of *shakk*, an issue much to the fore in the time of Hârûn's schism. But the advantage of *wuqûf* is that it allowed for pragmatism, for tolerance, and for healing rifts in the community. Which is why it was the basis of the Nizwâ party's approach to the events that had led to civil war (cf. Chapters 11 and 12).

#### Abû 'Abdullâh as *faqîh*: organization of state

But above all, at the time Abû 'Abdullâh arrived Oman was in great need of a reforming system of government and a practical legal code in accord with the precepts of Ibâḍism. Even fairly elementary matters of ritual were still being disputed. Two *rak'as* seem to have been established early on as standard practice at the main Friday prayers in the Muslim world,<sup>54</sup> and four seems to have been introduced under 'Uthmân, according to Shabîb b. 'Atîyya, who roundly condemned Ibn Mas'ûd for his report of an innovating tradition. Jâbir b. Zayd, who also strongly emphasizes the importance of the Friday prayers, also states that one prayed two *rak'as* behind the Imam.<sup>55</sup> Even so, many of the Ibâḍis came to consider four as the correct number. So the Imam 'Abd al-Malik ordered the Imam of the Friday mosque at Nizwâ to stop doing two *rak'as*, but when he fell terminally ill and was not attending, 'Umar b. al-Akhnas reverted to his **(p.290)** old practice. Mûsâ, who was present, did not reproach him, but Abû 'Abdullâh condemned 'Umar and those who prayed with him,<sup>56</sup> yet another little confrontation with Mûsâ! Subsequently, four *rak'as* at the *khutba* in the Friday prayers became a distinguishing Ibâḍi practice. Whilst it was permissible to pray behind *jabâbira* in the *amṣâr al-mumaṣṣara*, that is, the main centres of the Islamic world, elsewhere one did not pray behind those who did two *rak'as*.<sup>57</sup> Yet the *two-rak'a* practice seems to have persisted in certain places in al-Ṣalt's time, and Mûsâ b. Mûsâ is accused of having reintroduced it when making the *khutba* for the Imam Râshid after he deposed al-Ṣalt.<sup>58</sup> The probable explanation is given by the future Hadrami Imam, Abû Ishâq,<sup>59</sup> who was surprised to see the practice when attending Friday prayers at Nizwâ with the Imam al-Khalîl b. Shâdhân (see Chapter 12). In this he explains that there is a dispute over whether one should sit between the two *khutbas* and that Ibn Baraka says there is no *julûs* between them. There is no record that Abû Bakr, 'Umar, or 'Ali sat between them, and it was 'Uthman in his late years who did so, because he was fat. Some say that it was Mu'âwiya who introduced it. (Such examples would, of course be sufficient for the Ibâḍis to do otherwise.) In Hadramawt, Abû Ishâq states, we sit.

Most important was the misuse of the communal wealth of the Muslim community, the *ghanîma* and the *ṣawâfi* (a term that in fact conflated *ṣawâfi* proper and *fay'*) that had prevailed before the proper establishment of the Imamate. So al-Azhar b. 'Ali (an early 'âlim, active in 'Abd al-Malik's Imamate) says that he saw his father 'eating' from the *ṣâfiyya* before *zuhûr al-'adl*, after which he paid for what he took. In part this was due to insufficiently precise rulings. Thus we have the rather simplistic statement from Mûsâ b. Abi Jâbir that the *ṣawâfi* was for the *aṣḥâb al-suyûf*, that is, the *shurât*, while Hâshim b. Ghaylân reports Bashîr b. al-Mundhir as saying it belonged to the Muslims. That seems to represent the rather unrefined level of instruction given by the early missionaries. A more detailed version for its distribution was given by Mûsâ b. 'Ali replying to the Imam Muhannâ. The *ghanîma* divides into five parts, four for the warriors (=

---

*shurâtlmuqâtîla*) and one (= the *khums*) for God, the Prophet, and his works and his relatives (*al-qurbi*). Thus the calculation is based on sixtieths, forty-eight to the *muqâtîla*, with the *fâris* receiving twice that of the foot-soldier (if no cavalry is present then each soldier receives equal parts). This, of course, was no more than a reiteration of the fundamental Qur'ânic principle. But the refinement in Mûsâ's instruction lies in the use of the obscure or historically outdated elements that **(p.291)** formed the twelve *khums* parts. Three were allocated each to the *masâkîn* (poor), *yatâmi* (orphans), and 'Ibn *Sabîl*', and the first two distributed in the area where the *ghanîma* was taken. The shares attributed to God and the Prophet were to be used to buy arms to strengthen the Muslims. Abû 'Abdullâh further refined Mûsâ's ruling, saying that the parts attributed to the *Ibn Sabîl* and the Prophet's *qurbi* may be used as the Imam sees fit (including distribution to women).

These rulings reinforced the power of the state, for the *shurât* were the military backbone in the First Imamate, and very much a force to be reckoned with, both at home and abroad: to the point that the classical authors often simply refer to the Ibâdis as *shurât*. Abû 'Abdullâh, in his letter to the Maghribis, makes their responsibilities clear. By definition, they have committed themselves to 'Forbidding Wrong' and so are obliged to fight an attacking enemy, whereas the Imam cannot compel the *qa'ada* to fight. They should help, but it is a question of *faql: jihâd* cannot be made a *farîda*. Although subject to the Imam's orders, the *shurât* had their own *qâyid* (commander) and, like the *muqâtîla* in the days of the Islamic conquests, had to report when required; if not, they neither received a share of the *ghanîma* nor pay from the *dîwân*. In Oman they seem to have served as a sort of reserve force, apparently still largely organized on tribal lines, subject to call-up and supplying by rotation garrisons permanently quartered at Nizwâ and Sohar (and probably elsewhere).<sup>60</sup> We have already seen how they were used against the Julandâ and the Mahra, as too in Hârûn al-Rashîd's invasion. In those cases there was, of course, no *ghanîma* since the enemy were Muslims, but they also served in overseas expeditions and here *ghanîma* was a real incentive. The navy seems, at least partially, to have been organized on similar lines, with ships and their crews being called up when required.<sup>61</sup> If the Ya'âruba period is anything of a guide,<sup>62</sup> the build-up of the Omani navy probably came from captured ships, mostly from the piratical *bawârij*, and these may well have been manned by renegades and captives; similarly, the Indian contingent active in the service of the Wali of Sohar in Muhannâ's time was also some kind of militia. But the *shurât* themselves were not a standing army and the tendency for Muhannâ to treat them as such ran counter to the Ibâdi ethos, for in such a force lies the slippery path to despotic power (*şulţân al-jawr*).

When on active service the *shurât* should be ransomed by the *Bayt al-Mâl* if captured, but otherwise such payment was at the Imam's **(p.292)** discretion, and generally individuals organized their own ransom. More controversial was the position of a slave accompanying an officially organized expedition. Mention has already been made of how the Imam Ghassân paid a considerable sum to recuperate one such taken captive while serving with the *shurât*, and that was confirmed by Abû 'Abdullâh who also overruled those who held that the distribution of the *muqâtîla* share to slaves and *dhimmi*s was at the Imam's discretion.<sup>63</sup> The importance of that becomes obvious when it is remembered that virtually the only important source of *ghanîma* in

---

Oman derived from overseas expeditions against polytheist countries and pirates, and that the crews of ships were largely recruited from the lower classes and slaves.

As well as regulating the *ghanîma* and the *şawâfi* and the distribution and collection of the *şadaqa* (*zakât*), the treatment of the subject peoples, needed firm guidelines. These had fairly obviously been abused. The fact that Muhannâ had 14,000 *ra'âya* living below his fort at Nizwâ shows there were still many unconverted, while the numerous rulings about the *ahl al-arḍ/bilâd*, who seem mainly to have been *majûs*, indicates that there was no advantage in converting to Islam (see next chapter) and that peasants may well have been tied, effectively if not theoretically, by adscription to their holdings. The letter of instruction, possibly originating from Abû 'Abdullâh himself, given to the Wali of Rustâq in the Imam al-Şalt's time is revealing of the social structure in the villages.<sup>64</sup> The *jizya* from the *dhimmis* was to be collected at the end of the month; 4 dirhams per month from the *dehqans* and *mulûk* and 2 from the well-off. Nothing was due from children, craftsmen, the poor, the chronically ill, women, slaves, or domestic slave-girls. Quite clearly many villages, at least in the Ghadaf, were still run along the old pre-Islamic lines, with a responsible headman, the *dehqan*, and large landowners, the *mulûk*, and it is significant that Abû'l-Ḥawâri designates the *Şâhib al-Arḍ* under the old pre-Islamic term of *hanqari* (see Chapter 2).

This letter is interesting from another point of view too. The Rustâq area may well have received special treatment and come under the direct purview of the Imam himself. It was probably only after the Fajhî Imam Muhannâ died and Abû 'Abdullâh got his Kharûşi candidate elected that it was properly brought under Imamate control and a Wali installed; and it is for this reason that the letter of appointment carries very detailed instructions concerning tax-collection and distribution for all elements of society, Muslim and non-Muslim alike. Even then, it is to be noted that the Wali was not holding the major fort, which remained in Fajh hands, but was based at Hijâr Rustâq.

### **(p.293) Pragmatic rulings**

The majority of surviving rulings from the early Omani '*ulamâ*' were concerned with such macro-scale issues in setting up the Imamate. Judicial rulings were no longer a matter of opinion, as Abû 'Ubayda had been told was the case, for some of the '*ulamâ*' had been trained in Basra and the missionaries had inculcated the basic consensual '*ilm* concerning Ibâḍi rule. Abû 'Abdullâh's rival, Mûsâ b. 'Ali, was certainly a sound *faqîh* and a collection of his judgements, seemingly put together by Abû Ziyâd Waḍḍâḥ b. 'Uqba and his son Ziyâd, was at one time in existence and is referred to in the *Jâmi' Ibn Ja'far*, itself the first major compilation of *fiqh*, made towards the end of the 3/9<sup>th</sup> century and reincorporated in later judicial works. Similarly Abû 'Abdullâh's rulings survive through recirculation, although a *ḥifẓ* did apparently exist until at least the fourteenth century according to Barrâdi.

Once the Imamate was established, however, the crying need was for the good and orderly conduct of day-to-day life and the specifics arising from the peculiarities of the country and its economy, both overseas and at home. And it was the principles (*uşûl*) and derivative jurisprudence (*furû'*) governing such matters that Abû 'Abdullâh and his successors, his son Bashîr, 'Azzân b. al-Şaqr, Abû'l-Ḥawâri, Abû'l-Mu'thir, al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥawâri, and others of their

---



ilk, were primarily concerned with after al-Şalt became Imam. This can be illustrated by taking as an example some rulings specific to the peculiarities of Oman's geography, which I have compiled from the *Muşannaf*. These illustrate several pragmatic aspects of legal and administrative concern that are not always obvious from the subject-matter under which they are treated.

One group emerges under the heading of perjury (*ḥanath*). They demonstrate not only the close control government exercised over the population and its movements, but also how individuals tried to get around such constraints. Sohar, where Abû 'Abdullâh was the qadi, posed particular problems, since it was the main Omani port. So he adjudged that if someone stated/swore (*ḥalaf*) he had not sold a slave (*ghulâm*) in Oman but had sold him in the port/anchorage of Sohar (*makallâ Şuḥâr*)<sup>65</sup> then he was guilty of perjury; likewise someone who said he was leaving Oman but in fact only went to the ships' anchorage. Abû'l-Ḥawâri similarly adjudged that if a man swore he did not have intercourse with his wife on a certain night at Sohar, but did so where the ships lie at anchor (*takallâ*) or closer in off the coast, then he too was guilty of perjury.

The problem of people not actually going where they declared, as between Sohar and Tuwâm, or Nizwâ and Izki, illustrates the control **(p.294)** exercised on people's movements. Hâshim b. Ghaylân opined (re the latter case) that the individual cannot be compelled to go where stated, even if he had made such a declaration concerning destination, but not all agreed. The reason was probably because both examples concerned movement within the same province (*mişr*, see below). On the other hand, should someone state he wanted to go to Nizwâ to greet the Imam but failed to do so, then he had perjured himself with regards to declared intention. Later Ibn Baraka made a more general ruling to the effect that if someone states he is going somewhere (again the example is from Sohar) but returns because he is ill, then that is permitted, but if he fails to go without good excuse then he has perjured himself.

Then there was the question of attending Friday prayer. The basic rule, which goes back at least to Jâbir b. Zayd, is that it was obligatory if you lived within 2 farsangs of the Friday mosque. And that included being at sea, according to Abû Sa'id al-Kudami, although some discussion follows about specific geographical features like creeks (*khawr*), or if cut off by an entrenched wadi, as in the Wadi Qîqâ. This last is of some interest since Qîqâ (present-day Ma'bîla near Sîb) was one of the places destroyed in the great flood of 251/865 when, after heavy spring rainfall had already swollen the wadis, a night of tremendous storm at the start of June caused flooding on the coast the like of which has never been before or since (at least until 2007!) *Aflâj* were ruined, bodies carried down to the sea, and whole villages destroyed. The main effects were on the Batina. Sohar was severely damaged by the Wadi Şulân, but the major disaster was in the lower Wadi Sumâyil, where Bidbid was washed away and the great fortified centre on the coast at Damâ destroyed, as too nearby Qîqâ which had originally been settled by refugees from Manaḥ suffering from drought. From Abû Sa'id's ruling it is clear the flood had caused a major trench, which caused an impediment for getting to the Friday mosque that had been built by the eponymous Lady Qîqâ from Manaḥ. Further rulings stated that if you were away from home, you went to the nearest Friday mosque within 2 farsangs. The place with such a mosque was designated a *balad* according to Abû'l-Ḥawâri<sup>66</sup> ( Ḥ Nabhân b. 'Uthmân Ḥ Imam al-Şalt), as distinct from a *qurya* (village). He also states that when the Imam of a *balad* dies there has to be

---

mutual agreement about his replacement; it is not just a matter for the people of the mosque to decide.

Such rulings also raised the problem of defining the urban and village areas. So Abû 'Abdullâh defined the limits of Sohar as the Wadi Şulân in the west and the Wadi Majazz, but there seems some uncertainty about the latter. That is not without interest, since Majazz was a place where important Arab tribes settled (Salîma and Farâhîd), as too in neighbouring (p.295) Hijâr ('Atîk), and both were closely involved with the politics of Sohar, itself highly cosmopolitan. Sohar was also designated a *mişr*, the centre of a province with a full governor. That is why in the period following the civil war, when the basic principle of not having two Imams in the same *mişr* came to apply within Oman itself, Sohar and Tuwâm were considered as one, but not nearby Hafît (which probably formed part of the Sirr). These administrative divisions gave rise to an interesting set of rulings concerning transport between the *amşâr wa'l-buldân*, which in turn brought to the fore the important principle of what could be specified in a contract. The legal concern was to reduce to a minimum the uncertain or unspecifiable (*majhûl*).

So, there was no dispute if the places were clearly laid down in the contract. If, for example, the carrier was taking someone for 10 dirhams between Jawf and Tuwâm and arrived in Sirr and said that's it, then any argument about names was irrelevant. But if the area was not known to the carrier then a specific place had to be stipulated. Thus, Abû'l-Mu'thir says, the Sharq, the Jawf, and the Gharb are not specific. Abû'l-Ĥawâri develops this, stating that it is natural for a transporter to consider the point of engagement as the first main centre in the region to which he is carrying. So if engaged from Sohar to the Jawf that would be Bahlâ, even if Nizwâ were intended. Similarly, Nizwâ is a large place, so if the hirer wanted Ghantaq rather than Su'âl he should say so. Sirr, Jawf, and Tuwâm were districts and there were places to be specified in them. Otherwise, if the contract was for carriage of goods, then the *sûq* was the proper destination, and if for a passenger, the door of the Friday mosque, failing which the assembly-place of the village.

Such problem of destination and route were particularly important at sea, when ocean-going ships (*sufun*) or smaller dhows (*khashab*) were hired for a specific task. In the case of the former, the route was presumed to be the customary one, but there were conditions for pleading *force majeure* and breaking an engagement in a long-distance voyage. Using as an example the case of a person who had taken passage from Sind to Aden but bad conditions had enforced a deviation to Oman, Abû Qaḥṭân ruled that if a ship sinks or runs into weather which the captain (*mallaḥ*) could not cope with, there was no indemnity, whereas if it was due to a fire or incompetence, then there was liability. If a ship were damaged so that it had to return to port (example given, as in Hind) the captain was still responsible for finding a replacement for the goods he was carrying, unless the contract was specific to his ship. This is why goods had to be properly declared and their ownership clearly marked upon embarkation. An important ruling came from Abû 'Abdullâh concerning the type of problem whereby a merchant had taken passage at Basra for Sirandîb (Ceylon) but on reaching Sohar had got cold feet or changed his mind; it (p.296) was generally agreed that he could not be forced to continue, so he should pay the conventional compensation. However, if after inspection it was shown that his goods lay in the bottom of the hold and unloading them would cause delays or considerable expense, then

someone on board should act as agent (*wakîl*) and the ship's captain accept liability for their safety, as though the merchant were still present.

#### 'Azzân b. al-Şaqr

From the above it is clear that Abû 'Abdullâh's main rulings concerned Sohar, not surprising as he was qadi there from 249/863 and died in that post in 260/873. His appointment was clearly due to the fact that, having grown up in the Ibâdi milieu at Basra with its important merchant community, he knew the kind of problems that were facing the rapid expansion of Omani maritime commerce. (It also perhaps got him out of the way of the internal politics of Oman, where he was still probably considered something of an interloper although admired as a *faqîh*).

As already illustrated, the problems were essentially pragmatic, but they had to harmonize basic principles and custom. Who his successor as qadi was at Sohar we do not know, but it may have been 'Azzân b. al-Şaqr, for he is recorded as dying there in 268/881-2.<sup>67</sup> According to Al-Salmi, he is considered the first Ibâdi 'âlim of the B. Kharûş and was a student of Abû 'Abdullâh. I am not clear where he derives this information from; all I have seen was that he was a Yaḥmadi and came from Ghalfiqa Nizwâ. But what is interesting is that he is held in the most remarkable esteem in the Maghrib. Abû Ya'qûb al-Warjîlâni, in his *K. al-Dalîl wa'l-Burhân*,<sup>68</sup> starts his list of the most important rulings which all should know about after the Prophet and the Qur'ân with Muḥammad b. Maḥbûb (= Abû 'Abdullâh) followed by 'Azzân b. al-Şaqr, 'Amrûs b. al-Faṭḥ, Abû Khazr Yaghlâ b. Dhultâf (al-Wisyâni), and 'Abd al-Raḥmân b. Rustam. A bit further on he gives a list of the ten leading *â'imma*, where Jâbir b. Zayd is followed by Abû Mu'âwiya 'Azzân b. al-Şaqr, and here Muḥammad b. Maḥbûb is relegated to number nine! (No Abû 'Ubayda in either list!) The Omanis also consider 'Azzân and al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥawâri (al-Sâmi) as the two most prominent *faqîhs* of the generation after Abû 'Abdullâh,<sup>69</sup> though there appears to be nothing like the number of rulings extant attributed to 'Azzân, as there are from Abû 'Abdullâh.

The reason for his prominence may have something to do with justifying the Nizwâ party's attitude of *wuqûf* concerning the deposing of (p.297) al-Şalt (see Chapter 11), for Abû Sa'îd al-Kudami, in his *K. al-Istiqâma*, says that from the time of Abû Sufyân and his son Abû 'Abdullâh, indeed to that of 'Azzân b. al-Şaqr and al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥawâri, there was no schism in the *dîn al-ibâdiyya*; these two were like two eyes in the same face, the most learned of their generation. But whereas 'Azzân died before the 'events' (the civil war), al-Faḍl knew them (and backed the deposing of al-Şalt, the cause of the civil war). But from the point of view of the present discussion what matters is that by the time Abû 'Abdullâh died there was no question about the scholarship of the Omani 'ulamâ'. So in the following discussion of rulings concerning overseas trade during the period of the First Imamate, no attempt will be made to attribute the authorship, but it may be assumed that Abû 'Abdullâh was responsible for many of the judgements concerned.

#### Oman Overseas: Maritime Law

Ibâdi *fîqh* appears to be the only school that really provides a corpus of rulings dealing with the specifics of a maritime economy. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that the *Muşannaḥ* (Book XVIII, chs. 12-16) starts its study of life at sea with the warning that the *fuqahâ'* disapprove of earning a living on the high seas, except for the purposes of conducting the Hajj and *jihâd*, and

---

that there are other ways of gaining a livelihood. This little statement is a clear indication of the tension that existed between the Omani 'ulamâ' of the interior safeguarding pure traditions and those who recognized the essential importance of maritime activity in Omani and Basran life: and it also perhaps reflects a traditional Arab attitude that is mistrustful of, or indeed despises, seafaring. This becomes very apparent over the thorny issue of how to pray.<sup>70</sup> One school sees it as like being on the *miḥmal* on a camel, seated. Others, notably al-Rabî', that it should be standing wherever possible, as for instance at anchorage, a view Abû Qaḥṭân elaborated. The always rigid Mûsâ b. 'Ali, who lived in the interior of Oman, maintained there was no difference, whether on land or sea, whereas the flexible Abû 'Abdullah, who knew the Basran traditions, held that you don't kneel to pray on the back of a camel or inside a ship: furthermore, the pragmatists said there was no harm in holding on to a rope or part of the ship and they also recognized the problems of washing and cleansed clothes in the context of ritual purity on board. Others maintained that in any case the only place to pray was **(p.298)** on the deck planking, nowhere else. Further elaborations maintained that a ship was not like a mosque and communal prayer should only be conducted behind an Imam: and if there were groups from different obediences (*firaq*) they prayed one after the other behind their Imams, and so on. And if there was a qadi aboard he should be consulted first about the problems. And so on.

Other rulings deal with a wide range of problems, like discipline, or trading while on board. Another set concern shipwreck and the rights over goods subsequently recovered, or claims against villagers who found washed-up coinage or goods (flotsam and jetsam). These latter are interesting since they involve some of the earliest extant rulings, from Sa'id b. Muhriz and Hâshim b. Ghaylân. However, what we will concentrate on here is the wider aspects of international trade.<sup>71</sup>

From the corpus of *fiqh* rulings there is plenty of evidence of trade with Sîrâf, Iraq, and Sind, and it is clear that by the middle of the 3/9<sup>th</sup> century at least there were Omani communities living beyond the Gulf, in Aden and al-Shiḥr, and at Daybul in Muslimized Sind. Commercial arrangements cut a cross loyalties to tribe, state, individual rulers, and indeed even religion. In this way Omanis were assured of equal treatment by local merchants in the main Muslim ports of international trade, Aden, Raysût, Basra-Obollah, Sîrâf, and Daybul, while in turn internationalizing their own emporium of Sohar to both Muslim and non-Muslim trade. Similarly, Omani penetration into the *dâr al-ḥarb* was considered by the Ibâḍis a part of their duty to expand the *dâr al-Islam* as a whole rather than specifically bringing it under their own regime. What was being re-created was the original *Arḍ al-Hind*, but instead of being under a Sasanid hegemony it was to be under Muslim control.

Sohar was now a very favourably treated place, for while most ports were subject to what was euphemistically referred to as *mukûs*, under Imamate rule Muslim merchants, Omani and non-Omani alike, were subject to the extremely low tax rates of *zakât*, which were hardly designed to meet the sorts of fortunes that could be made, as Ibn Khaldûn makes clear with respect to the Bûyid period in Sohar.<sup>72</sup> This amounted to 2.5 per cent (after deduction of loans and advances) of liquid resources and a monetary assessment of stock held for a complete taxation year (*ḥawl*); by both parties in the case of a partnership arrangement. Certain natural products, like pearls and amber, frankincense, and dyes were not taxed until actually traded, nor was jewellery so

---

long as it was not simply, (p.299) specie held in disguise (e.g. gold and silver, often made up into jewellery and sold by weight). A distinction was drawn between personal effects and the trading capital of a merchant coming to install himself in Oman. Transit goods (defined as held less than a year) destined for other Muslim countries (specifically Fârs and Iraq), whether coming by land or sea, were exempt. An Omani merchant returning home paid *zakât* for each completed year (if he was away more than once in the year he only paid after his *ḥawl* had been completed); that is, unless he could show he had paid his liability to the poor in a place like al-Shiḥr or Yemen (see above). An Omani did not pay tax on goods he held for Muslim traders living overseas (Iraq and Aden specified). Christian Arabs paid double the rate of Muslims (on the model of the Bani Taghlib). *Dhimmi*s originating from overseas paid the *jizya* after residing three months, but if an Omani *dhimmi* went overseas he paid his tax abroad, unless he went into polytheist territory when he was exempted for the time away, so long as he did not leave property or family in Oman.

Trade, based on a reciprocal tax regime, was permissible in non-Muslim areas through temporary *amân* agreements that guaranteed mutual safety. They were renewable each year, or two at most, since in the interim the Muslims might have become sufficiently strong to enforce a full submission; some authorities maintained that the onus was on the polytheists to renew, failing which *ghanîma* could be taken. Most important was the ruling that polytheist merchants (and almost certainly foreigners in general) could only reside at Sohar, which was also the taxation point for all overseas trade, for it ensured that the interior was not tainted nor exposed to external influences, and it thereby reinforced the dichotomy between inward-looking Oman and the cosmopolitan world of its main maritime centre, *a fortiori* when under foreign occupation or vassal rule. Under such circumstances the split in authority took the form familiar in more modern times as 'Muscat and Oman', although in the period following the civil war it would have been more appropriate to label it 'Sohar and Oman'. On their side, Muslims (Ibâḍis) were not allowed to base themselves permanently in polytheist countries and any goods coming from such origins paid tax the moment they were sold or transformed (manufactured), rather than after the customary year (*ḥawl*). To ensure that such *amân* arrangements were not upset, it was stipulated that individuals should not act on their own initiative, but could only make war through joining an expedition authorized by the Imam: some tolerance, however, was recognized for individual ships which might capture a polytheist *bawârij* (pirate) ship and treat it as *ghanîma*. Indeed, Abû 'Abdullâh laid down that individuals should not even carry arms into *dâr al-ḥarb* areas, except where there was active warfare, as in the China domain. That, incidentally, indicates that the Muslims were being harried as the T'ang (p.300) dynasty declined, even before the sack and massacre of foreigners at Canton (Guangzhou) by the rebel Huang Chao,<sup>73</sup> which occurred nearly five years after Abû 'Abdullâh's death. It is further underlined by the ruling that if, in a fight with polytheists off the Indian coast, it was found that there were Chinese ships among them, then they too could be treated as *ghanîma*

#### East Africa<sup>74</sup>

The Omani sources indicate that these *amân* agreements were operating in parts of Zanj (East Africa) and parts of Hind (probably including Sirandîb). Commerce in East Africa, however, was rather different from that of the eastern wing of the Indian Ocean trade, where interest was essentially with products of the Indian subcontinent and beyond. Particularly important was the

---

supply of the 'incorruptible' wood, teak (*sâj*), from the Malabar coast, which was essential for shipbuilding; its export is recorded in the *Periplus* (first century AD), while Mas'ûdi makes clear it was in general use for constructing Indian Ocean vessels.<sup>75</sup> In Africa the main concern was probably in obtaining slaves, though other products, notably gold and ivory, were traded. There were two sources for these: Abyssinia, that is Christian north-east Africa, and the Zanj Coast, where in due course Kilwa was to emerge as an Arab colony (periodically under Ibâdi governance). Slaves from both these areas played an important part in Iraq and the Gulf. We have already seen that in Mu'âwiya's time a slave community had been established in Bahrayn, and when in 66/686 Najda established himself in the region it was estimated at some 4,000 families.<sup>76</sup> In the 5/11<sup>th</sup> century Nâsiri Khusraw<sup>77</sup> described how the Qarâmiṭa lived in their capital in interior Bahrayn, rather like a Greek city-state, as 'citizens' supported by an agricultural slave class of Abyssinian origin, which he estimated at 30,000. On the other hand, in southern Iraq black slave labour was used from the earliest times, perhaps by reason of their tolerance to malaria, but there must have been a great expansion in their numbers in the 3/9<sup>th</sup> century when the Basrans began to invest their wealth from overseas trade in trying to restore the old irrigation system and clear the land of salt with Zanj labour; whence the major **(p.301)** Zanj revolt.<sup>78</sup> And in Oman slave labour was used for cultivating on the labour-intensive irrigation system of the Batina coast.<sup>79</sup>

Central to this trade from the Omani point of view was Socotra. In what is generally called Abyssinia there was no longer any real strong power. The Axumite empire, which had emerged around the Red Sea and controlled most of north-eastern Ethiopia, the Sudan, and extended influence into southern Arabia, had already declined as the result of the Sasanid—Byzantine wars, while towards the end of the first Islamic century the Arabs eliminated the Axumite fleet and destroyed its port of Adulis. Pushed also by a decrease in the spring rainfall, the ruler moved to nearer Lake Haik, some 360 km further south, and by the 3/9<sup>th</sup> century was of no importance; agricultural wealth and political power now developed in central Ethiopia.<sup>80</sup> Socotra obviously formed a suitable offshore base for exploiting this transitional situation north of the Horn of Africa and was also strategically sited for operating in Zanj country. That seems to designate the African coast below the Horn (Cape Guardafui), which is what the Imam al-Ṣalt's letter (see below) probably referred to under the name of Râs al- Zanj. At that time the Banâdir coast had scarcely if at all been subjected by Muslims, while Kilwa was not really Muslimized until well on into the 3/9<sup>th</sup> century, at the earliest.<sup>81</sup> The Zanj country proper, however, centred on the Sofala (Sâfil) coast.<sup>82</sup> As its name suggests, it was at the extremity of navigation from Oman and Sîrâf, and there is evidence from Jâḥîz (d. 255/868-9) of slaving there, but he makes no mention of the gold that Mas'ûdi (d. 345/956) speaks about. That probably only became important after the Kilwa settlement started and could profit from locally established trade between the 'Swahili' coast and the interior. Even so, in the Julandâ period there was certainly a sufficient contact with the region for the brothers Sa'îd and Sulaymân b. 'Abbâd to take refuge and settle there following Hajjaj's invasion of Oman.

In the early First Imamate Socotra was thus the furthest outpost under direct Omani and Ibâdi control, despite being effectively closed during the full monsoon blast (navigation was generally difficult on the whole South Arabian coast); it was also of some interest for its local products, notably 'Dragon's blood' and aloes. Because of its strategic importance various colonies since at

---

least Alexander's time had been implanted by the Greeks, Byzantium, and the Sasanids and it had been an appanage of the Sabaeo-Himyaritic civilization. Much of the population was of Mahri (p.302) origin, Qamar-Mahri according to Hamdâni,<sup>83</sup> which had intermarried with the 'Rûmi' colonists, but there was also an admixture of peoples from the Indian subcontinent. The former were predominantly Christian, while the latter were presumably the *mushrikûn* referred to. It was also a *bawârij* lair.

It is reported that Socotra had been brought under Omani control in the Imam al-Julandâ's time, but by *shurât* from the South Arabian coast, as Hamdâni implies and 'Awtabi firmly states.<sup>84</sup> There was no Omani fleet at that period, and the fact that it was considered as part of his domain is a clear indication that after Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq, the South Arabian Ibâḍis recognized the Omani as their Imam. While the *mushrikûn* had been treated as such, a *ṣulḥ* had been agreed with the dominant Christian population<sup>85</sup> against payment of *jizya* (not slaves), as the *Jâmi' Ibn Ja'far* shows, and a Wali appointed. Apparently Socotra remained under the control of the *shurât* until either the Christians rose (or less likely there was an Abyssinian raid<sup>86</sup>), the Wali and his men killed and property looted. The Imam al-Ṣalt consequently mounted an expedition, reputedly transported by 101 ships, and the place was brought back under Omani government.<sup>87</sup> The long letter of instructions to the commanders given by the Imam (seemingly dictated by Abû 'Abdullâh) stipulated that the Muslims, including the *shurât* (those surviving, presumably) might be evacuated should they so wish. No doubt Socotra slipped away from Omani control after the civil war, but in any case it lost its importance once settlement started on the Banâdir and Zanj coasts.

This interest in slaving is manifested in the numerous rulings concerned with the enslaving of populations as *ghanîma* in the First Imamate. When a people of the Book accepted a *ṣulḥ*, there were two forms it could take, payment of a *per capita* tax ('*alâ ru'ûs*), as had the Christians of Socotra when they submitted to al-Julandâ, or of providing so many slaves ('*alâ raqîq*). In the Muslim conquest of North Africa the slavery option had frequently been imposed, and in places become a permanent measure, rather in the same way as the *kharâj* devolved on the peasants working the land (hence the resentment of the Berber population). In Oman it was deemed that whilst the initial payment might be in the form of slaves, in (p.303) the second year it automatically reverted to the poll-tax (*jizya*) system, since by then the local population had shown it had accepted its subject status and become protected *dhimmi*s. A *ṣulḥ* was permanent and should be reaffirmed each year, but if the population failed to comply then it lapsed and *ghanîma* was taken, as was the case when Socotra was recaptured. On the main Zanj coast the proto-Swahili population was *mushrikûn* (at least at the time we are concerned with), and here slaving could go ahead. But it seems to have operated through amenable local rulers whose authority extended into the hinterland, and in such areas regularly frequented, *amân* agreements became effectively quasi-permanent. Elsewhere an expedition could only be mounted on the authority of the Imam, although a little initiative was permitted in dealing with 'pirates' on the borderlands of the *dâr al-ḥarb*, but in that case there was no liability for the Imamate to ransom those that fell into the hands of the enemy.

So Oman prospered from its overseas empire, and its expansion and trade were regularized in accord with Ibâḍi principles. Thanks largely to the rulings and guidance of Abû 'Abdullâh, who

---

was really the last of the leading Basran 'ulamâ', and during the long Imamate of the moderate Kharûṣi al-Ṣalt whom Abû 'Abdullâh established in power after the quasi-tyranny of his Fajhi predecessor, Oman entered into a real golden age. Or so it seemed.

Notes:

(1) Qalhati's *Kashf wa'l-Bayan* gives Mûsâ b. Abi Jâbir, Munîr b, al-Nayyir, Sulaymân b. 'Uthman and (A. Sufyân) Maḥbûb b, Rahil al-Basri as one cohort.

(2) *Tu'fa*, i. 122.

(3) Cf. Al-Salmi, Thesis, 217 and n. 162 for correspondence with Michael Cook. The importance of this Kûfan school is further touched on when discussing the *Dîwân al-Ma'rûḍ* in ch. XIV.

(4) There is reference in this period to a Abû Ziyâd al-Tâjir, but he is unlikely, for Waḍḍâḥ was a distinguished 'âlim.

(5) *QS* lists 'Ali b. 'Uzra and his son al-Azhar, Abû 'Ali Mûsâ b. 'Ali, Abû Jâbir Muḥammad b. Ja'far (of the *Jâmi' Ibn Ja'far*) and his son al-Azhar, Abû Jâbir Muḥammad b. 'Ali, and Abû Ibrâhîm Muḥammad b. Sa'id b. Abi Bakr, all Izkawis from around about this time.

(6) *Tuḥfa*, i. 137-8.

(7) I am grateful to Professor Madelung and Dr Al-Salmi for making some helpful comments on the following section.

(8) References in Wilkinson 1985: 243.

(9) Some of this may also be found in the *Bayân al-Shar'*, MNHC edn. (1982), i. 152-4, 183-5.

(10) The following general discussion is based essentially on Madelung's classic 1974 article and Hind's excellent study in *EI2*, Miḥna, which provides other of the main references.

(11) Cf. *Jâmi' Abi Ṣufra*, §02 as well as the *K. al-Taḳyîd*. Barrâdi, somewhat confuses Abû Ṣufra's *K. al-Ḥujja 'alâ al-khalq fî ma'rifat al-ḥaqq* with the *K. Ḍumâm*, which he says was related from al-Rabî' from Ḍumâm (i.e. the *Athâr*).

(12) See also as reported in Ibn Baraka, *Muwâzana* (Kâshif edn., ii. 412).

(13) See *EI2*, Ibn Dirham.

(14) Ben Moussa 1971: 43.

(15) 1984: ch. 8.

(16) Cf. van Ess 1976: 63.

(17) q.v. in *EI2*.



- (18) *K. al-Taqyîd*, 4.
- (19) See Cuperly 1984: 85.
- (20) Cuperly 1984: 34, 85-6, 214-15; Madelung 1985.
- (21) Cf. *inter alia* his treatment of *şifât* in his *sîra* (Kâshif edn., ii. no. 30). In this the main issue discussed is whether He is a *jism* or not.
- (22) *K. al-Taqyîd*, 27. A variant transmission from Ya'qûb b. Ishâq is: 'do not say the Qur'ân is created or not created, do not say that it is God or not God, but say it is the word of God.'
- (23) Cuperly 1984: 85.
- (24) *Sîra*, Kâshif edn., 309 and 284 ff.
- (25) *K. al-Taqyîd*, 53-4. It is also expressed by Abû'l-Mu'thir in his *Sîra* when discussing *kasb* (Kâshif edn., ii. 284).
- (26) q.v. in *EI2*.
- (27) Montgomery Watt 1943.
- (28) Preserved by al-Barrâdi *Jawâhir* and summarized by Cuperly 1984: 217 ff.
- (29) A non-Ibâdî who lived in Tahert in the final years of Abû'l-Yaqzan 's Imamate and wrote around 290/903.
- (30) Al-Salmi, Thesis, no. lvi.
- (31) *Ibid.*, no. lv.
- (32) Cf. *Dîwân* (BL MS Or. 2434, 71v ff.).
- (33) Cf. Cuperly 1984: 216.
- (34) Ennami 1971: 234-5, based on a work of Barrâdi's.
- (35) The '*aqîda* in the *Kashf* (which, of course, is not by its compiler) continues to avoid the issue by simply stating that the Qur'ân is 'the Word of God' (cf. Cuperly 1984: 149).
- (36) See Crone 1998 (based on al-Shahrastâni).
- (37) Rulings of al-Bisyâni followed by al-'Awtabi recorded in the *Muşannaf*.
- (38) q.v. in *EI2* suppl. (van Ess); also Montgomery Watt 1943.
- (39) q.v. in *EI2* (Madelung).

- (40) There are traces of the correspondence in the *K. al-Taqyîd*.
- (41) *Muṣannaf*, x. 40.
- (42) *Ibid.* 32.
- (43) *Kâshif*, ii., no. 29.
- (44) See Al-Salmi 2009b: 489.
- (45) Cf. *inter alia* Lewicki 1959.
- (46) Cf. Ba Wazîr 1378 AH, 58-9.
- (47) Mas'udi, *Murûj*, ch. 106 (p. 67); Hamdâni, *Ṣifa*, 87-8; Lewicki 1959.
- (48) Bisyâni, *Su'âl* (*Kâshif*, ii. 98-9).
- (49) *K. al-Taqyîd*, 165 and *Bayan al-Shar'* (MNHCM 1047), i., ch. 16: for his expenditure see Abû'l-Mu'thir, *Ṣifa* (*Kâshif* edn., i. 55) and also the *Sîra al-Barara*.
- (50) *Jâmi' Ibn Baraka*, 1971 edn., i. 328.
- (51) *Bayân al-Shar'* iii (on *walâya wa barâ'a*). Note incidentally the transmission chain Abû'l-Ḥawâri ‹ (Abû 'l-Mu'thir) al-Ṣalt b. Khamîs ‹ (Abû 'Abdullâh) Muḥammad b. Maḥbûb.
- (52) *Jâmi' Abi Ṣufra* (no. 01); 'Awtabi, *Ḍiyâ'*, iii. 72 and 74.
- (53) Incidentally, there is no evidence that the deposed Imam ever did make a *tawba*.
- (54) e.g. when Busr gave the Friday prayer at Mecca after imposing Mu'âwiya's rule (cf. Madelung 1997: 302).
- (55) Letter No. 3 to Ṭurayf b. Khâlid, §§ 42 and 43.
- (56) *Tuḥfa*, i. 136.
- (57) Cf. Abû'l-Mu'thir quoted *Tuḥfa*, i. 209, *Muṣannaf* x. 71.
- (58) Abû'l-Mu'thir, *Ṣifa*, 26-7, 67-8.
- (59) *Dalâ'il* §414.
- (60) In Ya'âruba times the wali's troops were still designated *shurât* (cf. *Jawâbat Ibn 'Ubaydan*, ch. 2).
- (61) See notably the section *shârîn* the *Jâmi' Ibn Ja'far*.
- (62) Cf. Bathurst 1967: ch. 4 and Wilkinson 1987: 185-6.
-

- (63) One is reminded of the Najdiyya precedent (cf. Ch. 5).
- (64) *Tuhfa*, i. 184–93.
- (65) Sohar had no real port, and the ships either lay off at sea or were beached.
- (66) *Jâmi'* MS 1221.
- (67) Anon. A mentions an alternative of 278, but this cannot be, for it is specifically stated he did not know the troubles that arose from the deposing of al-Şalt in 272.
- (68) Part II, 11 and 72–5.
- (69) *Tuhfa*, i. 166.
- (70) As well as the *Muşannaf*, see also *Jâmi' Ibn Ja'far* (MNHC edn., ii., ch. 11) and the Hadrami, Abû Ishâq, in his *Dalâ'il*, whose summary is largely derived from what Ibn Baraka recorded (*taqyîd*) about the disputes amongst both 'our Basran and Omani *aşhâb'*.
- (71) Some of this material is discussed in my 1977 article. The main sources are the *Jâmi'*s of Ibn Ja'far (who it should be remembered was himself temporarily posted to Sohar), Abû'l-Ḥawâri, and al-Bisyâni (particularly for *zakât*), and the *Muşannaf*.
- (72) *Al-'Ibar*, iv. 480; cf. also Forand 1966.
- (73) Cf. *inter alia* *JESHO* 49: 4 (special number devoted to the Chinese maritime diaspora).
- (74) Some of this is discussed in my 1981 article; see also Pouwels 1978 and Lewicki 1977.
- (75) Cf. Agius 2005: 30. Its importance was such that the Portuguese occupied Daman and forbade its export to the Arabs (personal communication from the director of archives, Goa). It is worth noting that the generic term used on the Gulf coast for dhows is *khashab*, referring to their construction with timber of high quality.
- (76) Balâdhuri, *Ansâb*, xi. 126–8.
- (77) *Sefer Nameh*, 225–9.
- (78) Popovic 1976.
- (79) Cf. Ch. 8 for the Imam Ghassân's time. Abû 'Abdullâh (*Jâmi' Abi Şufra*, §134) talks of operating the *dawwâb* (hoist lifts) and stipulates proper rest for the slaves and animals, and that normally night work should only be carried out under supervision: his father also speaks of not maltreating slaves.
- (80) Butzer 1981.
- (81) For details see Wilkinson 1981.

(82) q.v. in *EI2*.

(83) *Şifa*, 52-3. So close was the link of this Qamr Mahra domain to Oman (for Qamr-Riyâm see Ch. 2) that the *Ḥudûd al-'Alam* (p. 58) perceives the island as located close to the country itself (cf. also Ibn Ḥawqal, *Şûrat al-Ard*, 58).

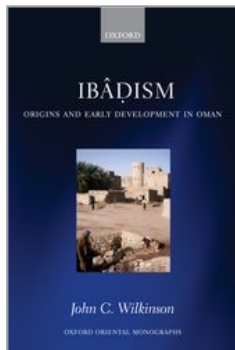
(84) He states (Af105) it was the *shurât* of Mahra and Hadramawt who took it.

(85) Abû Zayd al-Sîrâfi (text pp. 134-5, trans. pp. 139-10) confirms that the majority of the population were still Christian towards the end of the 3/9<sup>th</sup> cent.

(86) 'Ubaydli 1989 has argued in favour of an uprising by the local Christian population.

(87) See notably *Tuḥfa*, i. 166 ff. and the *Jâmi' Ibn Ja'far*. I can see no reason why Serjeant (*Society and Trade in South Arabia* (Variorum reprint, 1996), 139) should consider the Imam's letter purely apocryphal.

University Press Scholarship Online  
Oxford Scholarship Online



## Ibâḍism: Origins and Early Development in Oman

John C. Wilkinson

Print publication date: 2010

Print ISBN-13: 9780199588268

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2011

DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.001.0001

## The Ibâḍi Ethos

John C. Wilkinson

DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.003.0010

### [–] Abstract and Keywords

This chapter describes the underlying ethos in Ibâḍism of equality before God, and illustrates this with particular reference to the protection of the rights of the peasants and other producing classes. It shows the ability of Ibâḍi law to adapt to the needs of an agricultural economy in two entirely different environments — that of Oman based on an ancient pre-Islamic *falaj* irrigation system, and that of colonization *de novo* in the Mzab. As barriers between the indigenous village population and the Arab tribesmen broke down, the *majûs* converted and a remarkable assimilation of the villagers and tribesmen occurred that is not characteristic of neighbouring regions. Nevertheless, the concern for protecting the little man from illegal seizure in an agricultural economy now based on privately owned *mulk* small holdings, led to a sterilization of vast areas of former production, when land that fell into the hands of *jabâbira* (tyrants) reverted to Ibâḍi rule, while a tax system that failed to recognize inputs other than labour as a factor of production did not encourage reinvesting in expensive irrigation reconstruction.

*Keywords:* Ibâḍism, Oman, Mzab, agricultural economy, irrigation, colonization, peasants

### The Local Economy

But Abû 'Abdullâh was not infallible. He has a ruling that where a *falaj* was under Islamic organization (the pre-Islamic system still largely pertained amongst the *majûs*) and those responsible agreed to costly excavation work, it was a liability on all present or aware of the project, but not those ignorant of it. That runs counter to all the *falaj* judgements that have evolved in Omani *fiqh*; that the *falaj* is a collective responsibility and all are obligated by what is decided. The ruling in Ḥanbali *fiqh*<sup>1</sup> that upstream holdings have no responsibility for

downstream is not even entertained: all members of the *falaj* community are responsible for maintenance and upkeep, proportional to their shareholding.

The Omanis knew their own agricultural economy better than did the outsider! All their rules emphasize the communality of interest in the basic survival of a village, whatever its tribal or other divisions. Everyone must turn out or contribute when a problem arises with the *falaj*; repairs, excavation, and cementing of the main distributive channels are a joint responsibility, as too upkeep of the forts, walls, and other village defences.<sup>2</sup> Although decision-making is a communal matter, unanimity is not essential when the problem is serious, so long as the leading shareholders (*jubâ*) are in agreement. Even the orphans have to help, although they should not be put to work on hewing hard rock (*şafâ*), but rather in helping clean out silt. We have already noted the same communality expressed in the ruling that when the Imam of a *balad* dies, all have to agree about his replacement, not just the people of the mosque.

There were two essential overlapping features governing the *fiqh* that emerged concerning the land economy in Oman under early Ibâdi government: the need to be pragmatic coupled to an ethos of helping the poor and underprivileged.

**(p.305) Irrigation rulings**

I have already written very extensively on this subject,<sup>3</sup> and here will simply point to some salient features. The basis for all rulings is that resources in their natural state, whether on land or sea, are communal property (*res communis*). It follows that no ruler or person may appropriate such unimproved resources to sell or rent them, while tax may only be levied from the produce of their exploitation (crops, livestock, the profits of a pearling expedition, etc.). The ethic is pre-Islamic. In manuals about water law this principle is enshrined in a *ḥadīth*: that man holds three things in common, water, *'ishab* (natural grazing), and fire. The fact that I have never seen it discussed in any Omani code is not because it is a *ḥadīth*, but because it is so obvious that it forms part of what is well known and established (*al-ma'rûf*). In contrast, it forms the first clause of legislation<sup>4</sup> for the Mzab, where settlement was being created *de novo*, in hitherto unexploited land.

Appropriation of water for irrigation purposes stems from another ancient principle enshrined in the code of *agro deserti*, that natural land is *res nullius*, it is 'dead' (*mawât*) and belongs to the first person who vivifies it (*iḥyâ al-mawât*). Vivication, on the other hand, should not prevent other groups from using natural resources; hence rulings and customs about access by nomadic groups within village bounds. Similarly, no territorial rights should impede the proper exploitation of a water resource. The Omani irrigation system tended to concentrate the *qanât* into a settlement complex, so that the use of ground water formed an integrated unit, even though the individual *aflâj* were discrete. As already shown, the Imam Ghassân early on tackled this problem and established that no surface rights prevented access for repair and maintenance to a *qanât* passing through or below the bounds of another village. These bounds again, are closely associated with another set of pre-Islamic precepts incorporated into the rules of *ḥarîm*, whereby every piece of immobile property has an integral bordering area. In the case of the sea, that ensures proper access, while in the case of a *falaj* or well, it helps prevent illegal tapping or pollution. These rules also eliminate the need to demarcate or enclose property (except for such

practical purposes as keeping animals out or keeping sand at bay from gardens), and in the case of irrigation channels it allows the community as a whole to see that the irrigation management and principal owners are maintaining the system properly and not misappropriating water.

Legal appropriation of a natural resource stems from input of labour. **(p.306)** This is the only factor of production recognized for establishing rights of private ownership (*mulk*), and hence the rate of *zakât* to be imposed on the product. From this principle stems the apparent anomaly that the Batina coastal strip is subject to a 5 per cent rate because irrigation requires a labour input to operate the hoist wells,<sup>5</sup> whereas a *falaj* is deemed a flow of water analogous to natural flows (*anhâr*) and like rain-fed cultivation (*ba'âl*, non-existent in Oman) subject to the full (10 per cent) *'ushr* (*qanât* were treated under the heading of *kazâ'im* in classical legal sources). In other words, capital and enterprise are not considered inputs, which is one of the reasons why merchants pay such a ridiculously low rate on their dealings and could make immense fortunes at Sohar. But it also illustrates another feature about Arab attitudes to the land, that the irrigation system had been in existence so long in Oman (since Sulaymân b. Dâwûd!) that the original capital input was irrelevant. Whether a *qanât* or a *ghayl falaj* (tapping a natural wadi flow), all were considered *aflâj* and assimilated into the regime of *anhâr*. So it might seem fair that those who enjoyed their benefit should pay the higher taxation rate.

On the other hand, such an approach was not conducive to major investment in constructing further *qanât* or rehabilitating abandoned *aflâj*, nor did it encourage serious maintenance of what could be a very costly system: in Iran it is estimated that the landlord should receive some 70-75 per cent of the return to make investment viable.<sup>6</sup> But while the tax-rate, *ipso facto*, cannot be invoked as a major factor for explaining why the original irrigation system was so often neglected in Omani history, it is indicative of an ethic that could on occasion be counter-productive, in the same way as that the rules concerning illegally seized land whose ownership could not be traced effectively sterilized it (see Chapter 12).

Another basic irrigation principle, effectively unknown in Oman, is the famous ankle's-depth ruling, also attributed to the Prophet. That is because it is irrelevant there, and I have only seen it mentioned once, in reference to flash floods as they affect minor settlements high up the catchment's area in the mountains, where it is appropriate. On the other hand, when the Ibâḍis were forced to retreat into the desert and start developing the flash-flood system of the Shabka to colonize the Mzab (cf. Chapter 14), the appropriation of water was most carefully regulated in accordance with the *sharî'a*, as can be seen in the *Kitâb uṣûl al-arâḍîn* of al-'Abbâs Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Bakr (d. 501/1111) and its recension in the *Kitâb al-Nîl* of 'Abd al-'Azîz al-Thamîni (1718-1808). But even **(p.307)** there the Prophet's ruling is taken for what it was, a guideline enshrining two basic principles; that irrigation proceeded in an orderly fashion downstream and that water was only appropriated as required (an ankle's depth is sufficient for producing a seasonal crop in areas of flash floods). Once again the Islamic rulings reinforce the custom, that a natural resource is appropriated solely for real needs and not for speculation. But had this ruling been taken literally, the ephemeral floods would only have been used for seasonal cultivation, as and when they occurred once every two or three years, whereas in the Mzab a sophisticated system of diversionary dams recharges the aquifer which is exploited by hoist wells cultivating palms as well as seasonal crops. Yet the guiding principle of an orderly

downstream appropriation according to needs has been carefully observed, while distribution within the gardens is ensured through a precisely measured system of underground weirs and lateral channels (Ghardaia is particularly sophisticated).

In Oman, on the other hand, where the system was already in place, the legislators quickly realized the importance of flexibility; if it works, leave well alone. The Prophet himself clearly showed this when, having seen a peasant pollinating the female palms with the male inflorescence, he remarked that it seemed to serve no purpose; but he immediately commented that it was no more than an observation after he saw the disastrous results that resulted from the farmer having treated his remark as an injunction. (It is perhaps relevant to note that the Greeks also did not understand the essential process behind this practice.<sup>7</sup>) The Omanis would well have appreciated the advice proffered in a treatise on exploiting ground water by a Persian engineer, al-Karaji, writing in [408]/1017 AD: 'I have now discussed all that Islamic law prescribes concerning *ḥarîm*, for it is preferable to follow it wherever there is no other ruling. But it may be that it does not always suffice and one must take into account the enormous variety of aquifers ...'<sup>8</sup>

The role of irrigation law is therefore largely confined to performing two functions for the Omani villagers: providing a set of basic rules that ensure cooperation and responsible behaviour; and providing the equity which enables the '*ulamâ*' to adjudicate in disputes. In the case of a *falaj* community the essential requirement is that the shareholders are agreed on the method of distribution and that each knows his entitlements and responsibilities. Provided these are clear, accord might be given to a wide range of distribution systems, and a study of *falaj* organization shows many permutations and combinations for ensuring fair dealings; in the diurnal rotation period, seasonal changes of flow, coping with drought, **(p.308)** measuring time, allocation of water shares to the *falaj* for maintenance, and so on.

But in the early period, when Imamate government was evolving, the '*ulamâ*' had to establish three essential sets of rulings affecting village life: harmonizing pre-Islamic practices with the code of Islam (*a fortiori* where the villages contained both Muslim and non-Muslim populations); that no group could impede another the right of access to headwaters (not an altogether easy task in a tribal society); and above all, fair dealings.

#### Fair dealings: the Ibâdî ethos

There are two aspects of what might be termed fair dealings. One is equity in the law: that all have access to and are equals before the law. Thus the author of the *Bayân al-Shar'* (lxviii, §37) insists that the people of the villages and desert are integrated by the *dîn* and the *ḥaqq*, so there is no distinction between them. That, conversely, implies that there was no special allowances to be made for the bedu or their '*urf*' and that they were subject to central government authority. The other is the ethos of the law itself, which largely depends on how and by whom the code has been created. So in the case of Islam in general, and Ibâdism in particular, there is an inner view of the law, a morality which not only permits flexibility but is also anti-capitalist. With regards to the village economy, that is apparent in Abû Sa'îd al-Kudami's statement that renting land, for money, share of produce, or by partnership agreement, is immoral: it ought to be given for free. In this he was clearly putting himself on the side of the tenant, of the small cultivator. On the other hand, he also had to protect rights of *mulk*, that is, private ownership (or ownership

---



vested in *waqf*). Properly established *mulk* was inviolable and it was the duty of the Imamate to provide protection against feudal or tribal notions of *seizin*, the concept that *possession vaut titre*. Ibâdî law has something of the notion of English medieval law that possession is nine points of the law. The tenth is the law itself, the 'King's' law, which rose above and eventually supplanted feudal tenure. The law was there to protect property. It could not condone the notion that title in illegally seized land (*maghshûba*) could be extinguished, even when the ownership could not be traced. Rather, it was administered by the Imam and its benefit went primarily to the local poor and needy.

In the same way as Abû Sa'îd could condemn a capitalist system of renting, but not abolish it, so the 'ulamâ' might recommend generosity and even indicate what they considered fair terms for the small man, but not impose them. So, for example, Ibâdism did not change the traditional 'idhq (bunch of dates) per palm which constituted the payment for *bayâdîr* duties (irrigation and tending palms), so that the *qismat al-bîdâr* (p.309) *wa'l-hanqari*,<sup>9</sup> the portion of the peasant and landlord, continued as before, but the 'ulamâ' could ensure that the customs were properly observed and the small man not tricked out of his rights. So, for example, a landlord may not make an agreement for a mixed area of cultivation of one year's duration and then claim right to the produce of tree crops on the grounds that the fruit had not reached maturity or ripened in the stipulated period. Similarly, if a herd owner makes a monthly contract with a shepherd for looking after so many head of livestock, he is responsible for the full month's payment even if he disposes of them during that period. Ibâdî *fiqh* is full of such practical rulings against sharp practice and ensuring the weak are not tricked by the wealthy, including women having their property misappropriated by their husbands.

One major set of rulings that protected the small man and labourer came under the heading of what was and was not specifiable (*thâbit* and *majhûl*) in a contract, and what was permissible to advance in loans (*salaf*). So all tenancy agreements were deemed uncertain and therefore could not be subject to a fixed rent but only a share of the crop (*qa'âdat al-arḍ bi'l-ḥabb*, as Abû Sa'îd put it);<sup>10</sup> and from the cultivator's point of view there was further protection from failure due to *force majeure*. The minimum for the leasee (*bîdâr*) was one-sixth of the produce, although owners could and did give more. Such protection was not confined to the Muslims. Of particular interest for studying the irrigation system in the period when some of the old customs prevailed and much of the indigenous population was still holding to the old religion (the *majûs*) is the earliest major ruling we have, from Sa'îd b. Muhriz. The standard form of agreement for re-servicing a ruined (*damîr*) *falaj* classified as abandoned (*ramm*), or whose limited flow has been determined, was that the *falaj* repairer received the water rights for ten years. Either the excavator took over the *falaj* as a going concern for this period, 'as did the Majûsi with the Falaj al-Râḥi', in which case he was responsible for maintenance, or he could lease it back for a fixed fee ('*anâ*), in which case the village was responsible for maintenance and the stipulated payment, even if flow decreased. On the other hand, neither party was responsible for a failure of water supply unless it could be shown as due to negligence. This is a fairly clear indication that the *falaj* expertise was still pretty much in the hands of the old *majûs* population. So too, it seems, were the mines. (p.310) An interesting case arises in the context of *ramm*,<sup>11</sup> in which the principle is enounced that if there are material traces of exploiting a natural resource then it is not *ramm* and a potential claim to ownership persists. Thus, when (the people of) Baql tried to

lay claim to a mine near Manâḳi (Rustâḳ area) it was adjudged as belonging to the Manâḳis and their associates (*ḥilf*), because it could be shown that in Islamic times it had been operated by them and the wages of the *majûs* fixed in dirhams.

Abû'l-Ḥawâri's response to the people of Mudaybi (Sharḳiyya) again makes clear that the terms of agreement must be most carefully stipulated and there was no comeback if things did not work out as hoped. It might be possible, as some maintained in the case of digging a well, to classify the types of rock and soil as *ṣafâ* (solid rock), *ḥashâ* (gravel), or *madar* (clay) and make the contract specific to completion, but there were generally too many variables to do so, in particular with regards to water flow. Such factors as flooding, blown sand, and collapse of the tunnel constituted *force majeure* and the excavator could not be held liable unless the contract specified he was responsible for repairs. Since the agreement was *majhûl*, payment was by work done: surface workers paid by the day, and those underground by the hour.

### Zakât

This ethos was certainly not determined simply by Islamic law. Arab and tribal society had a responsibility to all its members, and Kister has shown that the idea of poor and rich association was an ideal of *jâhili* Arab society.<sup>12</sup> In the Sasanid lands there was the experiment of Mazdakism, and whilst this was firmly suppressed during the century preceding Islam, it is possible that the ideal remained rooted in folk memory. But leaving aside speculations concerning the *jâhili* period, the principles of helping the poor, orphans, and so on were inherent in Islam, and spelt out in the rules governing *zakât* in both its collection and distribution, as too a share of the *ghanîma*. The system for levying taxation on agricultural produce was revolutionary, and any assessment of a crop before harvesting (the *khirâṣ*) abolished. Crops were assessed in kind, quality for quality, and only those with commercial potential subject to tax: even then there was a nil-rate band, the *niṣâb*, that exempted the poor. Once again the Ibâḍis interpret the basic rules favourably for the small man in what was essentially a subsistence economy. Even as early as (p.311) al-Julandâ's Imamate it was laid down that there was no tax on the product of the sea, thus effectively exonerating fishermen.<sup>13</sup> In agriculture, tax was only taken on grains, dried dates, and fruits, crops that had a marketable potential, as opposed to ephemeral produce of the oases like fresh fruits (including fresh dates in their *bisr* or *ruṭab* stage), legumes, green fodder, and grasses.<sup>14</sup> Livestock had a complicated set of rules,<sup>15</sup> but the end result was similar: it was not an onerous tax. And donkeys, which were the working beast of the ordinary villager, were exempt.

All these rulings were designed for those who had converted voluntarily with the coming of Islam. *Zakât*, which was a transformation of the original alms, *ṣadaqa*, was never conceived as a basic revenue for the state in the *'ushriyya* lands, rather as a symbol of duty to help the poor and needy of the Islamic community. Wealth derived from the conquered lands; which is why it was the land and not the owner or cultivator who was subject to *kharâj*. There, the poor, the peasants, the simple workers had merely exchanged one set of masters for another and had no incentive to convert to Islam. Islam had become the religion of the conquerors, not a universal appeal to join God's community.

### Khâriji attitudes

In contrast, the Khawârij, of whatever ilk, maintained the egalitarian ideology. It is true that their movement may have originated from the attempts of the *qurrâ'* to preserve their privileges in the conquered lands, but 'Umar's measures had in no way been designed to produce an egalitarian society: on the contrary, they permitted the privileged to accumulate huge fortunes and estates, and were designed to ensure a continued revenue for the state and those it favoured. Gone were the days when the Prophet preferred non-*ba'l* produce because *ba'l* land tended to be in the hands of capitalist farmers!<sup>16</sup> But the *sâbiqa* order was doomed to lapse once the first generation or two died out, after which the only surviving precedence was in Quraysh, protected by hereditary right. So although the *qurrâ'* might originally have been protesting against their losses in face of 'Uthmân's patronage and re-establishment of the *ashraf*, their ideology rapidly switched to an ethos that fought against acquired privilege, once they had lost their own.

So the success of the early Khawârij largely stemmed from the fact that they remitted the onerous taxes of the producing classes in the lands (p.312) where they took control, the *ahl al-arḍ/bilâd*, the *'ulûj*, and so on, and this continued well on into the 'Abbasid period. For thirty years Ḥamza b. Adharak (d. 213/828) played on the resentment of the local population in Seistan against fiscal exactions, to defy the Caliphate. The later Murji'ites also promoted the rights of the local population vis à vis their conquerors in Khurâsân and Transoxania, arguing for the equality of new converts and maintaining the view that a convert who confessed Islam without any knowledge of the Qur'ân or other obligations was nevertheless a *mu'min*.<sup>11</sup> That certainly would have been denied by the Ibâḍis, but it nevertheless illustrates how an important rival creed could feed on the same resentment to promote its dogma in the ex-Sasanid lands. In Arabia, Najda's state was established largely due to the way he had considered the slaves as having a right to a share of the booty, and his success in Oman, like the reverence there for Abû Bilâl's justice, was due to the fact that he temporarily rid the local population of Julandâ exploitation.

A similar approach is reflected in the Ibâḍi ethos. All were equal in the Muslim community, as Sâlim b. Dhakwân emphasized, and *sâbiqa* stemmed from the personal effort of acquiring *'ilm*. It is a precedence whose reward in this world is the satisfaction of belonging to the *khâṣṣ* and directing the true Islamic state. And pursuit of *'ilm* is the right of new as well as old converts. That is why we see the strong recommendation to the Imam Muhannâ by one of the leading *'ulamâ'* to forbid slavery: the only reason to allow it was to invite the slave to Islam.<sup>18</sup> Or again why Abû 'Abdullâh insists that subject peoples of any kind participating in official expeditions with the *shurât* received equal treatment. Certainly the Ibâḍis never entertained the idea, as did some Khâriji extremists, that a woman could be selected as Imam, but in theory the Ibâḍis could select a *mawlâ*, and in practice in the Berber lands the Imamate passed into the hands of non-Arabs. In Oman, there was never any question of that, but we have noted how al-Wârith b. al-Ka'b's humble peasant background was extolled and passed into popular mythology.

### Assimilation

### Early Ibâḍis and tribal attitudes in the ex-Sasanid lands

Such an approach, which placed precedence in Islam over that of tribal nobility, was probably strongly reinforced in the (proto-)Ibâḍi community which seems to have developed in no small measure amongst those who had little traditional status. But it was not just the non-tribesmen who **(p.313)** were disdained. The Hijâzi nobility looked down on Gulf society as a whole. Their barbs were well calculated, for the Omani Arabs had indeed been marginalized. Confined to the borderlands of settlement, they were bedu or gained their livelihood from the sea, whether as fishermen or impressed into the Sasanid marine. So the Omani tribesmen certainly must have had some empathy with the downtrodden. It is no coincidence that Khârijism in its various forms recruited from tribes associated with the Sasanid domain and implanted itself almost exclusively in the ex-Sasanid lands.

True, Ibâḍism also took root in southern Arabia, where the Kinda counted amongst the true tribal nobility. Although they were Sasanid vassal rulers at Hira, they had been recognized as paramount kings over the Persian parts of Arabia, whereas the Omanis lived in a land that had been directly occupied. The Kinda nobility could never completely forget their origins, and it was Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq's refusal to mix his blood-line with that of a *mawlâ* which caused the first Ibâḍi schism. Such nobility however, did not exist in Oman, where the Azd had no significant claims to royal connections, and it was as chiefs of a subject people that the Ma'wili and Salîmi shaikhly clans were promoted Julandâs by the Persians. Certainly they had won their liberty by converting to Islam and gone on to profit from the Muslim conquests, but even then it should be remembered that their sphere of activity never extended beyond ex-Sasanid territory.

So when their fortunes collapsed, their natural instinct would have been to find an ideology indigenous to their own sphere of experience to justify opposition to the Umayyads. They had no loyalties to 'Ali: Kûfa, not Basra, was the base for Shi'ism; and Murj'ism had become pacific. So it was almost inevitable that the Omanis would turn to a form of Muḥakkima Khârijism that was taking root in their own *miṣr*, rather than among their tribal enemies, where the Ṣufiris recruited. But once the Omani Imamate had been established, with effectively a subordinate Imamate in the Hadramawt, the '*ulamâ*' quickly had to come to terms with the realities of life in a land that had been woefully neglected during Julandâ rule. Tribalism most certainly was not dead, and the tradition of exploiting the villagers, which had prevailed for nearly two centuries since the conversion to Islam, was not to be reversed overnight, particularly under an Imam like Muḥannâ. Nevertheless, as the '*ulamâ*' imposed the new order, the Ibâḍis' ethos gradually permeated everyday life and with it the values that had attached to the origins of the movement. What had to be fought, or rather come to terms with, was tribalism. It is perhaps symptomatic that many early '*ulamâ*' did not proclaim a tribal *nisba* and those that feature with one often had it attributed by later authors who knew their origins.

### **(p.314)** Privatization of the land

It is fairly clear from various snippets, disjointed by their nature but coherent when reassembled, that there had been little incentive for the majority of the indigenous population to convert. Islam was the religion of the Arabs, and the *majûs* had become their subjects. Balâdhuri<sup>19</sup> implies that the earliest agreements with the Gulf *dhimmi*s was for half the produce of the land, but the indications are that the Julandâ were even more rapacious, without providing the security that the early Caliphate governors ensured. Jâbir b. Zayd's letter to

Nu'mân b. Salâma clearly shows that much of the land was administered by the *dehqans*, while the evidence from Muhannâ's time indicates that the *ra'âya* still formed a large part of the population, as does the letter of appointment for the wali to Hijâr Rustâq. Further confirmation comes from numerous rulings in the First Imamate regulating relations with non-Muslims in everyday matters of commerce and purchase of land: notably, that if a Muslim acquired land from a *dhimmi* it continued to carry the tax obligations of its previous owner. Partnership with a *dehqan* or indeed any non-Muslim was forbidden, as Jâbir also made clear. Not only was much of the village population *majûs*, but so too those practising crafts and mining.

So the intermediaries in the villages remained the *dehqans* of the pre-Islamic organization, through whom the Arabs extracted wealth by a mixture of exactions, either illegal in Islamic terms, or disguised in the garb of *kharâj*, *zakât*, *jizya*, and *ṣawâfi*. Certainly the establishment of the Imamate abolished the worst abuses and ensured that the rules concerning the *dhimmi*s extended justice to Muslim and non-Muslim alike. Whether there originally had been a distinction made between *fay'* and *ṣawâfi* proper in Oman is not clear, but the two were early on subsumed under the latter term. But state property probably did not amount to much. Forts, administrative and military holdings, and possibly certain estates, notably in areas of late Sasanid development, fell into the hands of the Arabs, but not the villages as such. The situation in Oman was quite different from most other agricultural areas in the Sasanid domain.

Agriculture was based on small-scale oasis settlement developed by *qanât* in an extreme hot desert environment, quite different from the *sardsîr* (cold lands) of the Iranian plateau which used the same technique, and of a quite different order from the macro-scale irrigation works, like the weir and canal system of the Mesopotamian Sawâd, the rivers of the endoreic drainage basins of the Zagros—Elborz chains (Zayandé Rûd, etc.), and the Pamir—Hindu Kush complex (Oxus, Vakhsh, Kafirnigan, and the remarkable Halmand delta of Seistan), nor on extensive seasonal flood (p.315) irrigation as on the Euphrates, nor winter-rain fed land as in northern Iraq and parts of Iran. In the main area of empire the ownership of the land had always been vested in the state, exploited by a subordinate landlord class who held right of usufruct or tax farms as 'concessions' (*iqṭa'*) in different hereditary degrees. But it was a top-down distribution of rights; the concession-holders were never 'landlords', the European feudal 'lords of the land' who held property through *seizin* and whose authority the king recognized in return for military service. So this sovereign control automatically passed to the Islamic state when the old empires were conquered. The *dominium directum* (*raqaba*) remained vested in the state (*miri* in Ottoman terms), so that what becomes of interest for understanding the history of land administration is the *dominium utile* (*ṣaraf*). Even in weak periods the state never completely alienated its sovereign rights of *raqaba*, and full private ownership only emerged with the *Tanẓimât* and modern land reform.

*Qanât*, on the other hand, were special in that they did not require the kind of large directed labour force, whether compelled or captive, which probably characterized the development of these macro-scale works. *Muqannis* worked as small teams, and land-clearance was largely a communal effort, even though under the aegis of, or directed by, some form of governmental organization. In the earliest *falaj* building period it may well have been that of 'chiefdoms', a two-level hierarchy in which a 'chiefly' elite, perhaps controlling some sort of ceremonial centre,

ruled over a 'commoner' class living in villages and hamlets, as may have characterized the thirty-two 'cities' of Magan mentioned in the Babylonian texts. At other times it may have been through the representatives of a major central government, as with the *asâwira* and *marâziba* military and administrative class of the Late Sasanid period.<sup>20</sup> But whatever the system, the end result was similar: agricultural surplus was centralized into the hands of the elite through the taxation system. The whole mode of production was geared to subsistence agriculture, with the state and its intermediaries leaving a bare minimum for the peasant, in the sort of way the Prophet's letter to the Thumâla and Ḥuddân living in the area behind Sohar indicates. It was only in periods of enlightened self-interest that the state was prepared to waive, temporarily, taxation as an incentive for the village community to invest in the costly efforts of *qanât* building, as Polybius' famous description of the origins of *qanât*, written more than 2,000 years ago, tells us.<sup>21</sup>

So there were two levels of 'ownership', the sovereign right over the land and its use, and that of the village's usufruct. The village formed a **(p.316)** closed socio-economic community tied to the land, but one which had exclusive rights, often established since time immemorial. But the great difference between Oman and the main area of *qanât* irrigation on the Persian plateau was that agricultural wealth derived principally from the date palm, a long-lived tree crop peculiar to regions of extreme heat, whereas in most of the Persian domain the cultivation was grain, although orchards were also of some importance. In the *sardsîr* the cultivated area varied greatly with seasonal flow, and it is even possible that there was a redistribution of holdings to the peasants as in the 'field system' in Europe. In Oman the cultivated area under palms was a function of the *falaj*'s reliable base flow: seasonal and unreliable flow was allocated at the end of the distribution system to 'awâbi land for cultivating grain crops or fodder for livestock. To ensure adequate water supply for the palms, the village land was divided so that each sector had a fixed allocation of water, the *khabûra* (what may have been called *âd* by the Persians in Oman), distributed on a cycle (*dawrân*) round the oasis. Theoretically water, land, and trees might be treated as separable elements, but in reality they formed a single unit, the irrigated garden fixed by its positioning on the distribution system. That interdependence was recognized in *fiqh* as early as Jâbir b. Zayd;<sup>22</sup> someone who claimed he had sold his palm without the land was being fraudulent, a palm can only grow with its roots in the soil. Similarly, if someone developed a piece of land by irrigating it, the original owner had no rights to demand a higher rent or reclaim it.

In Islamic times each *falaj* had a communal organization which ensured its maintenance and supervised the distribution system, including the work of the *bayâdîr* (specialist labour directed by the *falaj* 'arîf): for such purposes it was allocated a share in the *dawrân*, which it auctioned on a temporary or annual basis, thereby also providing a certain flexibility for individuals to acquire water outside the rigid distribution system. How far this organization existed and in what form in pre-Islamic times cannot be ascertained, but the Arabic term *qa'âda* does indicate that it was originally integral with the *dawrân*, unlike ad hoc *zâyida* shares 'added' to meet some particular situation. But otherwise each basic *khabûra* was associated with a given piece of land and divided into time-shares allocated to the different gardens. So the irrigation allocation, land, and palms formed an integral unit, the basic subdivision of the cultivated area, and frequently associated with a particular *ḥâra* (quarter) in the village itself. How that right was held does not

really matter. The peasants worked a specific area planted with a quasi-permanent crop from a fixed water-distribution network. Land rights were effectively **(p.317)** hereditary within the community that was associated with each *khabûra*. So there was a basis for recognizing 'ownership', once the system was freed of the constraints inherited from the past. In the case of a *falaj* which came under Muslim organization that occurred automatically, and Abû 'Abdullâh's ruling (see above) shows that in his time there were already two different systems at work, that of Muslim private ownership and that of the *majûs* under their *dehqans*.

But the two were merging. As the Arabs of the interior settled they acquired certain of these *khabûra* rights, whether by force or peaceably ultimately matters little; some indeed may have been acquired in the pre-Islamic period. In Izki the early mixing of Arab and Persian populations can be traced in the ancient names of the *khabûras* of the old organization on the Malki *falaj*, the B. Mî, B. Hormuz, and so on appearing alongside those of the first Arab groups whose names no one knows anything much about today, the B. 'Ali, B. Ḥusayn (retained also in the quarter called Ḥârat B. Ḥusayn).<sup>23</sup> These Muslim rights were recognized as being held as alienable property, *mulk*, and subject to the rules of *zakât*. In so doing, the Imamate alienated any vestigial right of ultimate ownership it might have inherited, once the intermediary class of *asâwira* and *marâziba* who had held the villages as concessions from the Persian state had left. But the notion of sovereign rights over property in the '*ushr* lands (i.e. those regions, virtually all in Arabia, which had voluntarily accepted Islam and were subject to the *dime*) was pretty abstract. As Abû Sa'îd al-Kudami made clear, the ultimate ownership of land was vested in God and it was there for the benefit of those who used it, not for renting. In the non-Muslim villages or parts of a settlement, on the other hand, it was the *dehqans* (some of whom may even have converted to Islam) who generally administered the villagers, and as Jâbir's letter to Nu'mân shows, it was they who pocketed most of what was extracted from the peasants in the early days. Since all that could be levied legally, once Imamate government was installed, was the *jizya*, which was a personal tax that varied according to wealth, the solution for the Muslims, as Jâbir's letter shows, was to assess the wealth of the producing class properly and thus ensure that the resulting dues went into the *bayt al-mâl* and not the pockets of the headmen. *Kharâj* as such did not exist, except perhaps when renting out the *şawâfi* and *fay'* the inalienable property of the *bayt al-mâl* administered by the Imam (there was a dispute about whether such property could be used by non-Muslims, and it was on this issue that Abû 'Abdullâh overruled the Imam al-Şalt to permit it).

### **(p.318)** Conversion and assimilation

So there were two types of ownership rights, two social and religious systems, and two corresponding tax regimes. The great barrier to assimilation was not religion as such, but the social segregation and the different financial obligations it entailed. For the Muslims it discouraged them from obtaining land rights, since the *jizya* assessment devolved with the purchase: nor could they build on the land of a *dhimmi*, while partnership with the *dehqans* (or, for that matter, any other non-Muslims) was forbidden. From the point of view of the state, there was certainly a disadvantage in the non-Muslims converting, but only if they were big landlords. True, some of the pre-Islamic 'landlord' class, the *hanâqira* and *dehqans*, may have exploited large estates, whole villages (there was probably quite a wide regional variation), but the

---

holdings themselves were generally no more than operational units of subsistence cultivation: it will be remembered that at Nizwâ the Imam Ghassân already found the landowners to be mostly small holders. So the revenue from the villages was not great, and in a period when overseas expansion was producing major new wealth, the loss of revenue to the *bayt al-mâl* through conversion to Islam had to be weighed against the ideal that all should become Muslims. Furthermore, there may well have been pressure from new Muslim landowners, investing the surplus wealth originating from overseas trade, to relax the rules concerning non-Muslim land.

But for the non-Muslim population changing religion was a revolution. There is little doubt that in the early Islamic period, in Oman as elsewhere, the peasant population was locked into a system with no incentive to convert, reinforced by their own religious authorities who forbade it. The only escape was to drift to the cities, and in Oman there were none of these (even Sohar was not really urbanized<sup>24</sup>). The situation was certainly alleviated with the establishment of the Imamate and the proper administration of non-Muslim taxes, but under the likes of Muhannâ it is to be doubted that conversion was encouraged. Since the *dhimmi*s were incorporated into their own hierarchical social organization, it would have required considerable personal courage to abandon the religion of one's fellows, as witness the fight between the two Jews at Sohar. For the *majûs* in the villages such individual initiative was unthinkable. So the rules segregating the two populations discouraged assimilation, exchanges of property, or cooperation in economic relations. But probably as the result of the regime that Abû 'Abdullâh installed, which operated by the spirit as well as the letter of the law, there **(p.319)** must have developed a current in favour of conversion. We have nothing to indicate whether the process was slow or quick, but I suspect it largely took place in al-Şalt's long and prosperous Imamate. In any case, the end result was remarkable. There is nothing ignoble in working the land in Ibâḍi regions, and I was struck by that when in Beni Isguen (Mzab) I met the Imam of the community working in his garden. In Oman it suffices to contrast the traditional status of the *bayâḍîr* with that of *ḥirthân* in neighbouring Hadramawt,<sup>25</sup> or compare it with the way the Sunni Arabs exploit the Shi'î in the Greater Bahrayn region. Again, there is a marked distinction in tribal attitudes. In Oman there are no *ḍa'îf* tribes forbidden to bear arms; on the contrary, detailed study of tribal genealogy indicates how the old local population has been assimilated. So, for example, al-Ma'wali's account of his own tribe contains a grouping called the B. Dawla, the indigenous population of the tribal capital at Ifi, while similarly the Ḥawâsina has a clan called the 'Ulayy, which simply represents the diminutive 'Ulayj < 'ilj pl. 'ulûj.

So once rights of *mulk* had been recognized, sedenterization of the Arabs would not only have accelerated, but ownership fragmented towards subsistence farming.<sup>26</sup> My own studies of the evolution of water rights shows that even after ownership has been concentrated in periods of prosperity and investment in the land, the norm tends towards small-scale ownership.<sup>27</sup> While such fragmentation is partly the product of Islamic inheritance laws reinforced by a certain inherent equity in the tribal system, the small scale holding essentially arises from the scale of the irrigation system and the peasant mode of production. Thus the wealth barrier also tended to disappear between the two populations, and that was further encouraged by the Ibâḍi Islamic ethos, which favored the small man.



Certainly assimilation is not always complete, as witness the case of the *bayâsira*, who form a not inconsiderable part of the population, and are considered as clients (*mawâli*) of the tribes, often acting as servants *khuddâm* to the leading families. But they are not *ḍa'îf*, they can carry arms and some have become quite rich. Hamdâni (already quoted) and al-Jâḥiẓ<sup>28</sup> imply that their status stems from lack of racial origin, so that even poultry that has no pedigree are described as *baysari*. My own view is that they represent the earliest *souche* of population that has never quite (p.320) been assimilated by later migrants, but whose lowly status is less marked in Oman than elsewhere.<sup>29</sup>

But with regards to agriculture no such distinction was made. That is what Ayyûb b. Kirriba meant when he said whereas the Nabateans of Baḥrayn became Arabs, the Arabs of Oman became Nabateans. But it is a remark that should be treated with care, for whilst it is true that the Omani tribesmen became cultivators, the agricultural population of the villages also became tribesmen. Tribalism was never eliminated by the Ibâḍi ethos. But it did help weld together Omani society into a unity that was relatively little divided by social barriers and which was deeply rooted in a land whose primary settlement pattern went back to the time of Sulaymân b. Dâwûd.

Notes:

(1) Norvelle 1974.

(2) Cf. in particular the reply of 'Abdullâh b. Maddâd b. Muḥammad, quoted Abû Nabhân Jâid b. Khamîs, *K. Jawâbât fi'l-masâjid*, ch. 1). Every mature freeman in good health has an obligation to help build the outer wall to defend the settlement in time of fear; even those not living in the *dâr* are obliged, if they have property within the outer wall.

(3) Wilkinson 1977 (notably the Appendix), 1983a, and 1990.

(4) See Féliu 1909.

(5) The strip proximate to the coast where the palms tap direct into the aquifer is treated as *ba'l*, with a 10% rate.

(6) Details in Wilkinson 1977: ch. 7.

(7) Yaḥyâ b. Adam, *K. al-Kharâj*, 79–80. For the Greeks see Pavord 2005: 22.

(8) Trans. in Mazaheri 1973.

(9) The term is applied to two neighbouring hills, one large and the other small, in the Sumâyil Gap.

(10) It is important not to confuse this with what Firestone 1975 calls pseudo-*sharîka* contracts, as in the *khâmisa* in which water, seed, land, and draught animals are deemed on a par with labour, so that the peasant receives one-fifth.

(11) A *ziyâda* added to the *Muṣannaf* in MNHC printed edn. xvi. 62. Manâḳi was where the Nizwan Imam Abû Qâsim Sa'îd was killed in 328/939-40 (see Ch. 12).

(12) Kister 1965*b*.

(13) *Tuḥfa*, i. 89.

(14) Cf. *inter alia* al-Jannâwuni, 476 ff. and 505; al-Sâlimi, *Tuḥfa*, i. 190 and *Jawhar*, 117-19.

(15) Francesca 2003, basing herself on the *Aqwâl Qatâda*, notes that the Ibâḍi *niṣâb* for large livestock retains early traditions that were abandoned by both Sunnis and Shi'is.

(16) Cf. Kister 1960.

(17) Madelung 1982.

(18) See Al-Salmi, Thesis, no. xxxxiv.

(19) *Futûḥ*, 78 ff.

(20) For elaboration and references see Wilkinson 1987: 33-7.

(21) Polybius 10.28, trans. Shuckburgh; cf. Wilkinson 1977: 85 and 122.

(22) Letter No. 1 (no addressee).

(23) See Wilkinson 1977: table 10.

(24) Nevertheless, the *ra'âya* of Nizwâ in Muhannâ's time might partly have been displaced peasantry seeking work.

(25) Cf. Bujra 1971.

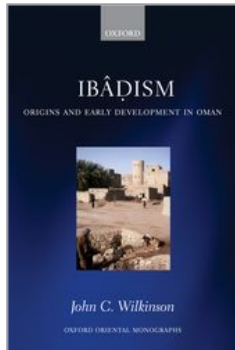
(26) I have argued in my study of Izki (Wilkinson 1977, 144-45) that while Islamic inheritance laws may cause fragmentation, the tribal parallel cousin marriage model encourages cultivating as a family unit so that the total number of operational units stay more or less constant. I also show that women rarely retain inherited water rights.

(27) Wilkinson 1977 ch. X and its appendix, 1987, 351 n. 36 for how the large Dallâl-Manâdhira holding resulting from rebuilding Yaman-Izki after the Ya'¾ruba civil war subsequently spread into the Yaman community as a whole.

(28) Jâḥiz quoted Serjeant 1968.

(29) cf. al-Ḥanafi 1964 who describes them in Kuwait as riff-raff, *ra'â al-nâs*, people with no origin, *aṣl*.

University Press Scholarship Online  
**Oxford Scholarship Online**



## Ibâdism: Origins and Early Development in Oman

John C. Wilkinson

Print publication date: 2010

Print ISBN-13: 9780199588268

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2011

DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.001.0001

### Civil War and Aftermath

John C. Wilkinson

DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.003.0011

#### **[ - ] Abstract and Keywords**

This chapter analyses the causes of the civil war sparked off by the deposing of Imam al-Salt in 272/886 and which ended up with the collapse of the First Imamate in a Caliphate invasion. It was not really Yaman versus Nizâr conflict, but an increasing marginalization of the northern tribes in manoeuvres over power and patronage in the Imamate system. The actual deposing and replacement of the Imam led to a growing dispute between the so-called Rustâq and Nizwâ parties, which is examined and shown as less to do with politics than principles in the early days of its formulation by Abû Sa'îd al-Kudami and Ibn Baraka. An attempt is made to resolve the confusion over dating events and personalities involved in the complex relationship between interior Oman and the occupying powers on the coast (Saffarids, Bûyids, Qarâmita and their Omani vassals) in the ensuing period, to understand how the (Second) major Imamate was re-established, Rustâq party dogma declared official, causing the Hadrami Imam Abû Ishâq Ibrâhîm b. al-Qays to break away as well as finally alienating the northern Omanis.

*Keywords:* Omani civil war, Rustâq, Nizwâ, Bûyids, Qarâmita, Imams, Imamate, Abû Sa'îd al-Kudami, Ibn Baraka, Hadramawt

Despite the remarkable changes brought about in the First Imamate, Ibâdi ideology had failed to transform the essentially tribal nature of Omani society. Born of a movement opposed to centralized government and hereditary power, the Imamate had survived through striking a balance with tribal and factional interests. Before analysing what went wrong, an attempt will be made to establish the facts about what led to civil war and a Caliphate invasion, in whose aftermath northern Oman was permanently alienated from Ibâdism, and the rest of the country divided for almost half a millennium by a dogma dispute between the so-called Rustâq and

Nizwâ parties. Unfortunately, our main sources for events are those of the Rustâq party, which maintained that the deposing of the aged Kharûsi Imam al-Şalt b. Mâlik and his replacement by Râshid b. al-Naẓr al-Fajḥi was illegal, so it is difficult to establish an objective assessment either of the justification for the act or the consequences. Ibn Maddâd has a report, emanating from al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥawâri, that when he went to Nizwâ during Râshid's time there were no less than seven positions taken by the 'ulamâ',<sup>1</sup> but the most vociferous from the start were those who condemned the act, and it is the *K. al-Aḥdâth wa Şifât* of Abû'l-Mu'thir al-Şalt b. Khamîs al-Kharûsi, present at the election (in 237/851) of his kinsman and who became a most influential 'âlim in the aftermath of the civil war, and the *Sîra* by the slightly later Abû Qaḥṭân Khâlid b. Qaḥṭân from Hijâr (Rustâq? Wadi B. Kharûs?), who provide the two principal accounts available to us. Others, like the blind *qarrâ'*, Abû'l-Ḥawâri Muḥammad b. al-Ḥawâri, while starting neutral, were so shocked by the results that they respectively repudiated Râshid and adopted the Rustâq arguments. Even apparently objective accounts of the battles given by 'Awtabi should be treated with reserve since his own forebears had been closely involved in events, while he himself was a strong proponent of the Rustâq school. Nevertheless, the tribal details he gives provide a precious key which helps us look behind the façade of religious bigotry, as too do the writings of the neutralist position, the earliest of which is a *sîra*, no longer extant but much quoted, by Abû (p.322) 'Abdullâh Muḥammad b. Rûḥ/Rawḥ b. 'Arabi of (Samad?) Nizwâ that became the key stone to the Nizwâ party's attempts to heal rifts. This was fully developed by Abû Sa'îd al-Kudami, notably in his *K. al-Istiqâma*, whose opponents accuse him of suspending judgement (*wuqûf*) on grounds of *shakk*, the sin for which the early Ibâdîs had so roundly condemned the Murji'a and Hârûn b. al-Yamân.

#### The deposing of al-Şalt

Al-Şalt's deposing was a *coup monté* between the Fajḥ of Rustâq and Mûsâ b. Mûsâ al-Sâmi. With the death of Mûsâ's father in Muhannâ's time, the power of this Sâmi family had gone into eclipse, and it was a member of the apparently less politically ambitious Kharûs clan that Abû 'Abdullâh had imposed after the Fajḥi Muhannâ's death. From the insistence with which Abû'l-Mu'thir justifies his election, quoting a long list of names of those present, albeit admitting that some did not take part, it is fairly clear that some resentment over his choice persisted. It is also obvious that al-Şalt, who had been ruling for thirty-five years, was losing control, changing his mind about appointments, making poor decisions, and being generally indecisive; even Abû Qaḥṭân has to admit he was on the brink of senility. One particular act mentioned by Abû'l-Mu'thir that caused resentment was al-Şalt's shifting the man responsible for supervising the market at Sohar to Julfâr, which was probably connected with his removing Muḥammad b. Ja'far (the famous 'âlim Ibn Ja'far of Izki who became a supporter of Mûsâ) less than two months after appointing him in charge of Sohar.<sup>2</sup> The importance of the Sohar appointments is obvious. Overseas commerce was now the great source of wealth, and holding post there was not only a major responsibility but also a chance for personal enrichment and patronage.

The smooth-tongued Mûsâ b. Mûsâ played on these resentments, sniping at the Imam and his qadis and the management of the *shurât*, but al-Şalt, out of respect for his father, tolerated him, failing to see the danger as Mûsâ furthered his ambitions in combination with those of the Fajḥ and other discontented Yaḥmad. To the fore were the Kalb Yaḥmad, a powerful clan which had hitherto played no role in Imamate affairs. The ringleader (*ra's al-fitna*) was Fahm b. Wârith al-

---

Kalbi al-Yaḥmadi, and his right-hand man was 'Ubaydallâh b. Sa'îd b. Mâlik al-Fajḥi, who, Abû'l-Mu'thir says, had no idea of the difference between right and wrong. Along with Walîd b. Mukhlad al-Kindi and al-Ḥawâri b. 'Abdullâh al-Ḥuddâni al-Salûti, this band from the Ghadaf met Mûsâ and his sup-porters (primarily from Izki) at Firq, before proceeding to Nizwâ where **(p.323)** they deposed al-Ṣalt, without confronting him with his failings or giving him a chance to make a *tawba*. That, at least, seems to be an established fact, but whether al-Ṣalt resigned or was deposed is not, albeit a vital issue for dogma disputes: all we know is he retired to his tribal homeland where he resided quietly with his son Shâdhân, until he died three years later. The 'rebel' group then returned to join Mûsâ at Firq, where they gave allegiance to Râshid b. al-Nazr/Naḍr al-Fajḥi (Dhû'l-Ḥijja 272/ 886). Like Muhannâ b. Jayfar, who had made it clear to Mûsâ's father that he had no intention of ruling under the thumb of the '*ulamâ*', the new Fajḥi Imam demonstrated he was not beholden to his son. So he refused the conditions Mûsâ attempted to impose on him, but it is unlikely that Mûsâ was really trying to do any more than ensure correct Ibâḍi rule, although Abû'l-Mu'thir tries to make he was *ḍa'îf* in his *ra'y*, used to leave the mosque before the end of the Friday service, drank, oppressed the *dhimmis*, and so on. More important is the fact that Râshid was elected by only a part of the '*ulamâ*', so not only had Mûsâ deposed a properly elected Imam, but he had chosen a replacement other than by general consensus. That is presumably why Mûsâ was reported to claim as his precedent Abû Bilâl's *khurûj* against 'Ubaydallâh b. Ziyâd: his too was a proper *khurûj* against an unjust Imam, and it was up to the others to follow. That, of course, is to presume that al-Ṣalt's rule had declined to the extent of comparing it with the notorious Umayyad governor. So the prominent Sâmi '*âlim* al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥawâri comforted Râshid, with the view that his election did not require the presence of all the Muslims; those that objected should have attended. That was not as 'unconstitutional' as it sounds: al-Salt's election was the first where there was a manifest *shûrâ*.

Amongst those reported as rejecting Râshid's election were obviously the Kharûṣis, Shâdhân, and Abû'l-Mu'thir, as too the future Kharûṣi Imam, 'Azzân b. Tamîm, but also, more interestingly, 'Azzân b. al-Hizbar (al-Mâliki of the Kalb Yaḥmad), which indicates that Râshid had not necessarily been a unanimous choice among the rebels (see below). Also dissenting were several of the generation whose fathers had earlier been prominent; like Muḥammad, son of 'Umar b. al-Akhnas (the Imam Ghassân's qadi at Nizwâ), as too one of the members of the Izki family who had elected al-Ṣalt, and also a distinguished Ḍabbi qadi (B. Sâma); that too indicates there was not entire unity among the Sâma, or at Mûsâ's Izki base. Whence presumably the seven positions taken at Nizwâ itself.

### Rawḍa

Râshid quickly tried to assert his rule throughout Oman, and all sorts of incidents occurred which his enemies latched onto, but may well have **(p.324)** been at least partly justified. It was in his Yaḥmad home territory that his acts caused greatest resentment, obviously among the Kharûṣ whom Shâdhân stirred up, but then increasingly among others, notably his original Kalb Yaḥmad supporters. Their falling-out probably stemmed from not having reaped the expected benefits. To appease them, Râshid did offer 'Azzân b. al-Hizbar the post of 'admiral of the fleet', which after consultation the latter refused, although accepting it under Râshid's Kharûṣi successor.<sup>3</sup> Abû'l-Mu'thir has a huge account of Râshid's misdeeds during the first nineteen months of his rule, in the way he dealt with the ever-troublesome Mahra, how a group from

---

Salût beat someone up, and so on. However, it was a confrontation between Râshid's force under the command of a 'robber and thief' in the Wadi B. Ghâfir and the imprisonment of the B. Ghâfir leaders that really started trouble, so that a group from the Kalb Yaḥmad called on Shâdhân to lead a rising. Suspecting their motivation, Shâdhân was hesitant, but continued to recruit his own support. In a pre-emptive strike Râshid cornered him with those he had gathered from the Wadi 'Amq at 'Aynay (Rustâq) on their way back to Sawni ('Awâbi) and the Wadi B. Kharûṣ. Shâdhân escaped and made for the Batina, where he probably raised support before returning to Rustâq and the Wadi 'Amq. Once again he was routed and made off. Râshid now decided to take possession of Rustâq itself, sending a force described as a pack of bandits, including the notorious Julandâni, Abû'l-Julandâ Mir'ân, known by the unflattering sobriquet of al-Ṭals. Having beaten up the place, one of the worst offenders, Râshid's Fajḥi lieutenant 'Ubaydallâh/'Abdullâh b. Sa'îd b. Mâlik, went on to Sohar where he caused more mayhem. Abû'l-Mu'thir makes out that Mûsâ was behind this, trying to pressure the merchants to make him a loan. That certainly makes sense, for Râshid and Mûsâ, isolated in the Jawf, were cut off from the wealth of Sohar, which along with the Batina was effectively a Rustâq appanage. By now the Fajḥ had lost the support of the rest of the Yaḥmad, and in the civil war stayed with the 'rebel' alliance. It marked the end of the clan's authority, for thereafter nothing more is heard of them in Omani history.

So it was three of Râshid's original supporters, the Kalbi brothers Fahm and Maṣ'ab, and Abû Khâlid b. Sulaymân, who assembled the leading Yaḥmad at Rustâq and persuaded Shâdhân to attend, along with Khâlid b. Si'wa (Sa'da?) al-Kharûṣi of 'Aqr Nizwâ. They decided to ask the 'Awtabi brothers, Muslim and Aḥmad b. 'Isâ b. Salma (our author's forebears), in Sohar to persuade the Batina tribes, the 'Atîk living at Hijâr (between Khabûra and Ṣaḥm, not to be confused with Hijâr Rustâq nor Hijâr B. Kharûṣ), and the Mâlik b. Fahm, to join them. The result was (p.325) that Naṣr b. Minhâl, head of the Batina 'Atîk, and the wealthy and powerful Sulaymân b. Mâlik b. Bilâl al-Salîmi of Majazz, who headed up the Batina Mâlik b. Fahm (which included the Farâhîd but not the al-Ḥârith), rallied with the sworn objective of deposing Râshid and joined the confederation at Rustâq. There they renewed their oath of alliance to depose Râshid, rather as the tribesmen had been rallied to overthrow the Julandâ in pursuit of their feud when first establishing the Imamate. Led by Fahm b. Wârith, the expedition took the route over the Jabal al-Akhḍar to descend into the Jawf at Rawḍa (between Tanûf and Nizwâ). Râshid, however, had intelligence of the attack and assembled his forces under the commands of 'Ubaydallâh/'Abdullâh b. Sa'îd al-Fajḥi, al-Ḥawâri b. 'Abdullâh al-Ḥuddâni with a Salût contingent, and al-Ḥawâri b. Muḥammad al-Dâhini. The Ghadaf-Batina coalition was severely defeated. Knowing the mountains, the Yaḥmad escaped onto the plateau and suffered least, but the 'Atîk and Mâlik b. Fahm fought on and the frail 'Ataki chief was killed, along with two sons and a brother, and several of the Salîmi and Farâhîdi chiefs. The Kalbi leaders and Khâlid b. Si'wa/Sa'da al-Kharûṣi were taken prisoner, as too the Salîmi shaikh. A year later, following the representations of many of leading Omanis, Mûsâ persuaded Râshid to release them.

This Battle of Rawḍa, which took place while the deposed al-Ṣalt was still alive, was the real cause of the civil war, as shown by the tribal *'aṣabiyya* which the Farâhîdi Ibn Durayd helped incite with his inflammatory poetry. In the end Mûsâ at Izki broke with Râshid, and after an attempt to patch things up had failed, started agitating to have him deposed. So he and his followers went to Firq, where they met Shâdhân, but two of Râshid's original supporters, Walîd

---

b. Mukhlad al-Kindi and al-Ḥawâri b. 'Abdullâh al-Ḥuddâni, refused to join them. Finally a group of Yaḥmad, 'Atîk, and Mâlik b. Fahm attacked Nizwâ and broke into the castle where they deposed Râshid, beating and imprisoning him. 'Azzân b. Tamîm al-Kharûṣi was thereupon selected as Imam (Ṣafar 277/890); once again an Imam had been deposed without being given a hearing. Râshid's rule had lasted a bit more than four years, although Abû'l-Mu'thir and Abû Qaḥṭân say that he did become Imam again and was deposed for misconduct and appropriation of the *ṣawâfi*; if so, it was almost certainly after the Caliphate invasion when 'Azzân was killed.

#### 'Azzân b. Tamîm al-Kharûṣi

Who exactly 'Azzân was is not clear, but he had a certain seniority, for there is a reply from Abû 'Abdullâh to him in the *K. al-Taqyîd* (added after the colophon). Although he had the support of Mûsâ and the (p.326) Izkawis and the Rustâq coalition, and Abû Qaḥṭân has reluctantly to admit that Abû'l-Mu'thir considered his *bay'a* correct, the latter had nothing good to say for him, except in the manner of his death. Similarly Ibn Baraka's teacher, Abû Mâlik, held him in *wuqûf* but was inclined to dissociate from him. Dissensions quickly developed. His qadi at Nizwâ refused to say the *khuṭba* and was replaced by 'Abdullâh b. Muḥammad b. Maḥbûb, while al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥawâri (al-Sâmi) kept away. Abû'l-Mu'thir himself did not actually dissociate, as some tried to make out, but he did retroactively *waqaf* from him at the end of his life, according to Abû'l-Ḥawâri. What really mattered at the time, however, was his breach with Mûsâ, whom he had appointed as his qadi. Afraid he would repeat his previous performance with Râshid, 'Azzân sent a force of criminals released from the prisons and those who had suffered under Râshid, letting them loose on Izki, which they plundered and burnt, and had Mûsâ killed; similar atrocities were committed against other Sâmi leaders and their Ḥuddâni allies in the Jawf. Naturally 'Azzân disclaimed responsibility.

That finally exploded the powder-keg. Immediately al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥawâri and the other Sâmi leaders proceeded to the SIRR, where they were joined by a Batina force under Abû Hudna that included elements of the northern B. al-Ḥârith Mâlik b. Fahm living there.<sup>4</sup> The leader of the Salût Ḥuddân likewise moved on to Yanqul to recruit from the Jabal Ḥuddân. Al-Faḍl then proceeded to Tuwâm with the Sâma and the SIRR 'Abd al-Qays (B. 'Awf b. 'Âmir b. al-Dîl, Lukayz)<sup>5</sup> to raise further support, notably from the B. Nâjîyya, before returning to Yanqul where they elected the Ḥuddâni al-Ḥawâri b. 'Abdullâh Imam, on condition of making war against 'Azzân. His choice was probably to ensure the support of Yamani tribes in northern Oman by electing an Azdi. Abû'l-Ḥawâri compares the situation with the revolts of Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr, or Mu'âwiya, against the true 'Imam' 'Ali, and the *shâkk* over Azzân was like that of the *shâkk* over 'Ali before the *fitna*. Like Abû'l-Mu'thir and Abû Qaḥṭân, he strongly refutes the obvious comparison with a justified Khârîji secession, despite what happened at Izki. Events moved at such a pace that no inquiry was undertaken over 'Azzân's responsibility for that; less than two months lapsed between Izki and the final defeat of the 'rebels' (with Ramadân intervening). As far as the 'Yamanis' were concerned, 'Azzân was in his Imamate and it was only much later that some '*ulamâ*' retrospectively began to wonder whether his rule had been just. Since 'Azzân (p. 327) met his end in battle against the Caliphate's invading forces he died a 'martyr', and so even those who had doubts never shifted beyond *walâya* to *wuqûf*.

Following the Ḥuddâni's election, the Nizâri confederation and their Yamani supporters marched on Sohar, which they reached a week later on a Friday (23 Shawwal 278/21 January 892) in time for the *khutba* to be proclaimed in the new Imam's name and a call for the populace to join him. On the Sunday the northern confederation marched out against the force assembled by 'Azzân. Under the command of al-Ahîf b. Ḥamḥâm, who brought a contingent of his B. Hinâ and others from the interior, it included the old Batina alliance of the B. Salîma and Farâhîd under Sulaymân b. Mâlik al-Salîmi of Majazz, and al-Ṣalt b. Naḍr b. Minhâl, the new leader of the 'Atîk from Hijâr, plus the Yaḥmad Shâdhân brought with him. There followed a battle (or just possibly two) at a place called al-Qâ' or Khiyâm near 'Awtab Ṣuḥâr, with the Yaḥmad and 'Atîk on the right flank and centre, and al-Ahîf with the Hinâ and other Mâlik b. Fahm on the left, a fighting disposition which is not only indicative of the old alliances but shows the forces were entirely Yamani Azd. The 'rebels' were routed, with some 600 killed, as against eighty-five of the 'Yamanis'. Others were taken prisoner, including Abû Hudna, who was beaten to death.

The names of the main leaders killed on the 'Nizâri' side are instructive. As well as the two leaders al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥawâri al-Sâmi and the Ḥuddâni Imam, there were many B. Sâma and a large number from 'Abdi clans. A Fajḥi is also singled out for mention,<sup>6</sup> indicating that the Fajḥ remained attached to the 'rebel' alliance and along with the Ḥuddân formed the Yamani element which had originally supported al-Ṣalt's deposing. However, leaving aside the Fajḥ, whose association with the Sâma was purely opportunistic, the essential feature to note is that virtually all the 'rebels' came from the north. Tribal balance had been maintained during the First Imamate by recruiting the Imam from the Rustâq area but ensuring he resided at Nizwâ, where the Sâma leaders in the lower Jawf and the Ḥuddân in the upper had considerable influence and the Yaḥmad little. But the tension between the northern tribes and those of the centre was always latent (the Ḥuddân were traditional enemies of the Yaḥmad), and when the B. Sâma and Ḥuddân leaders were driven out of the Jawf they had no alternative but to look to their tribal roots in the north, in the Sîrr and Tuwâm, and it was from there that came the forces with which they entered Sohar.

### **(p.328) The Caliphate invasion**

Muḥammad b. Qâsim al-Sâmi escaped from the slaughter to Tuwâm, where he was joined by Bashîr b. al-Mundhir, grandson of the original Sâmi missionary. The two then made their way to Bahrayn, where they enlisted the support of the Caliph's governor, the person the Omanis designate by the unflattering name of Bûr (Muḥammad b. Bûr/Nûr/Thawr), by presenting events as a Nizâri-Yamani war. Having reached an understanding with him, Muḥammad b. al-Qâsim proceeded to Baghdad where, after consultation with Mu'tadid, a huge force (reputedly 25,000) was collected for Bûr's invasion, made up of mainly of Nizâri tribes but also an important contingent of Ṭayy from Shâm.

News of the force reached the country and many deserted 'Azzân, with departures reaching panic proportions among the merchants and wealthy who quit Sohar and the Batina centres for the Persian coast, Hormuz, Shîrâz, Sîrâf, and even Basra. Amongst these was the B. Salîma shaikh who had played such an important part in causing the original strife, and he and his family and other members of his clan took refuge with al-Sakri, the Julandâ b. Karkar shaikh (of Salîma origins) at Huzû, staying until his death. His son Mahdi became governor of Hormuz on

---



behalf of the Julandâ ruler, and many stayed permanently, though some eventually returned to Oman.

When, therefore, Bûr's army landed at Julfâr it encountered little opposition and the Imam quit Nizwâ, making for the Sharqiyya. Ruthlessly pursued, he was forced to give battle at Samad, where his force was defeated and his head sent to the Caliph in Baghdad. A belated attempt by the Hinâ'i leader, al-Ahîf, to rally the tribes of the old confederation and those who had been standing aloof nearly met with success. Bûr, fearful of the gathering forces, decided to beat a retreat from Nizwâ and the Omanis wisely determined not to force a battle, content to press the invaders in their withdrawal to the Batina coast. Unfortunately they advanced too fast, and unintentionally cornered Bûr's forces at Damâ. The battle was going in their favour when major reinforcements from the Sâma arrived, two men to each camel, and the Omanis were crushed. This time Bûr was determined there should be no recrudescence of opposition and his name became a byword in Omani history. Plundering and killing, he destroyed the villages, burnt the books, filled in the *qanât*, and maimed the inhabitants. It was, however, the actual Battle of Samad, five days before the end of Şafar 280 (15 May 893), that marked the end of the First Imamate, and ever since Samad has been known as Samad al-Sha'n. The Omani state which had reached fruition just a century earlier lay in ruins.

### **(p.329) Aftermath**

It is not intended to pursue what then happened in detail, but some reconstruction of events and the nature of the rule in Oman are essential to make sense of more general themes relevant to our study. The task is made doubly difficult by the chaotic and fragmentary nature of the material available. For once, more is to be learnt from external sources and numismatic evidence<sup>7</sup> than from local accounts.

#### The coast: the Şaffârids and Aḥmad b. Hilâl/Khalîl

After his ruthless subjugation of it, Bûr reportedly left the country in the hands of Aḥmad b. Hilâl. Ibn Khaldûn,<sup>8</sup> who recounts valuable material but somewhat oversimplifies, states that the first governor was Muḥammad b. Qâsim al-S(h)âmi, that is, the man who had escaped and gone to Baghdad, and was succeeded by members of his family whose allegiance was guaranteed by the enforced residence of leading members of the tribe at Baghdad.<sup>9</sup> Aḥmad b. Hilâl (or rather b. Khalîl from the numismatic evidence) is generally assumed to be a Sâmi, but as Vasmer rightly points out this is pushing the evidence and I believe it is quite wrong. The interest of the Caliphate government was Sohar's trade and the Omani military and merchant navy; the situation in the interior was of little concern so long as it did not impinge on the coast. In any case, occupation of Sohar, the *qaşaba* of Oman, gave control of the Tuwâm area and Julfâr to the north, so that the Jawf was more or less isolated. The local sources, on the other hand, speak of Aḥmad first being based at Bahlâ, and this makes sense, for in fact the overall governance of Oman was vested in the Şaffarids. 'Amr b. Layth, whose base was in Fârs, had won favour with Mu'taḍid, who confirmed him in his territories in 283/896, and these probably included Oman. After 'Amr's death, just after Mu'taḍid (289/902), Şaffarid fortunes declined, but his successors and their Turkish commander Sebük-eri managed to hold on to Fârs, Kirmân, and the core of Seistan, more or less to the end of the century. We have coins from the Omani mint dating to 290, 294(?), 295, and 298, the early ones in the name of Ṭâhir b. Muḥammad (b. 'Amr b. al-

Layth) with the Caliph's name al-Muktafi and the last Sbkry (Sebük-eri) *ghulâm* of 'Amr b. al-Layth.

**(p.330)** Subsequently the whole region passed into the hands of Aḥmad b. Khalīl, who now resided in Sohar and is sometimes referred to as 'Şâhib 'Umân'. There are coins of his from 300 and 305 in the name of the Caliph, he was there when Mas'ûdi paid his last visit in 304,<sup>10</sup> while 'Arîb<sup>11</sup> reports that he sent presents to Muqtadir Billâh in Baghdad, which the '*Âjâ'ib al-Hind* (first half of 4/10<sup>th</sup> century) indicates he took in person in 306. The list of gifts given in 'Arîb, the '*Âjâ'ib*, and the much later Ibn Jawzi (d. 597/1201) shows how valuable this new accession was. A gold idol resulting from a raid ordered by Aḥmad on Hind was presented to Muqtadir, while excellent dyestuffs, spears, precious products of the sea, and mynah birds which spoke Hindi and Farsi more distinctly than parrots found their way as gifts to the pleasure-loving Caliphs, along with such curiosities as black gazelles and an ant as large as a cat (chained in a cage, it died en route). More importantly, it is clear from the story of the rich Jewish merchant who bribed Aḥmad with 1 million dirhams that the customs dues (politely termed '*ushr*') were credited directly to the Caliph in Baghdad.

That is why Sohar and its maritime trade stayed, one way and another, under foreign control throughout the rest of the period that concerns this book, with the briefest exception of a short interlude around 442/1050. Even so, it is worth noting that there was a limit to exactions. There was no real capital investment tied up in the infrastructure of any particular port, so there existed a sort of 'moral economy' that struck a balance between what was reasonable to pay government and the ability of merchants, like tribesmen, to do a *hijra*, to up stakes and establish themselves elsewhere, and which has been manifest throughout the history of the Gulf region. So the orders of the Caliph Muqtadir to arrest and detain this rich Jewish merchant in 300/912-13 caused the merchants to stop putting in at Oman and the ports of Iraq.

### The Qarâmiṭa

But there was another intrusive force impinging on Oman, the Qarâmiṭa (Carmathians), adherents of Ismâ'îli doctrine, who after 286/899 refused to recognize the Fatimid Caliphs' claim to the Imamate.<sup>12</sup> Ibn Khaldûn<sup>13</sup> speaks of their conquest of the country as taking place in 317/929-30, the year they carried off the Black Stone from Mecca, which contradicts his earlier date of 315. He also indicates that they came in to help a faction of **(p.331)** the B. Sâma who were quarrelling amongst themselves. In fact this, or these, dates appear to be a second conquest by Abû Ṭâhir al-Jannâbi, the first being by his father, Abû Sa'id al-Jannâbi, the founder of Qarmaṭi power in eastern Arabia who finally established control of Bahrayn and then Yamâma by about 290/903.<sup>14</sup> This was followed up by the invasion of Oman, on which both Mas'ûdi and the Omani sources throw a certain amount of light. The former<sup>15</sup> says that Abû Sa'id made several expeditions against Sohar, which he eventually took, and later goes on to say he was killed in 300/913 by two eunuchs whom he had captured in a campaign against 'Badr el-Muhalla, venu de l'Oman par mer pour le combat-tre'. Ibn Khaldûn himself indicates that Omani elements were beginning to ally themselves with the Qarâmiṭa in 305, and de Goeje, in his classical study (1895) of the Carmathians, quotes Ibn Muqarrad to say that there were many bedu in Abû Sa'id's army.

Unpalatable as it may be to the Ibâdis, the Qarmaṭi state in Bahrayn may not have been without its appeal, at least before the excesses of Abû Ṭâhir. It too preached reform of Muslim society by a rule of justice and equity, and the welfare Abû Sa'îd established evoked the admiration of non-Qarmaṭis like Ibn Ḥawqal, al-Muqaddasi, and Nâsir-i Khusraw.<sup>16</sup> It is also relevant to note that Qarmaṭism implanted itself in an area where Khârijism earlier had made considerable inroads and that Abû Sa'îd ruled in consultation with a council of viziers, the *ru asâ al-sâda*. So it is perhaps not surprising that elements of the northern confederation, the B. Sâma and Ḥuddân, might have turned to them as allies, and that we have such apparent anomalies as a Ḥuddâni styled as the Imam Abû Sa'îd al-Qarmaṭi.

The years immediately following Bûr's withdrawal were obviously chaotic in the interior. Aḥmad b. Hilâl's governor in Nizwâ was murdered in 282/895–6 and an Imam, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Kharûṣi from Fashḥ (Wadi 'Amq), was elected as a *shâri* Imam, but resigned. This seemed to start a spate of minor Imams, among them some who had been involved in the civil war on the 'rebel' side, including Râshid b. al-Nazr, making his second appearance before being deposed again; his former wali in Sumâyil, Muḥammad b. Yazîd; and 'Azzân b. al-Hizbar al-Mâlîki of the Kalb Yaḥmad.<sup>17</sup> Imams were elected and deposed at whim, and quite clearly there were rival groups simultaneously electing Imams, though there seems to have been a fairly regular line in Nizwâ.

The chaos is exemplified by the situation that developed when the **(p.332)** Ḥuddân profited from the Qarâmiṭa appearing on the scene.<sup>18</sup> While two rival Imams, al-Ṣalt b. Qâsim al-Kharûṣi (relative of the deposed Imam?) of Nizwâ (deposed/resigned?) and 'Azzân b. al-Hizbar al-Mâlîki of the Kalb Yaḥmad, were still alive, another group of Kalb Yaḥmad elected a Ḥuddâni, 'Abdullâh b. Muḥammad, without realizing he had become converted to the Qarmaṭi cause (whence his name Abû Sa'îd al-Qarmaṭi). When he left Nizwâ to join the Qarâmiṭa in the north they re-elected al-Ṣalt, who died in office, whereupon they elected a Saḥtâni (Yaḥmadi, eponym of Wadi Saḥtân) living in Nizwâ, Ḥasan b. Sa'îd, who died less than a month later, followed by al-Ḥawâri b. al-Maṭraf al-Ḥuddâni as a *difâ'i* Imam. But every time one of the Bani Sâma Sultans appeared to tax the Nizwânans, he withdrew to his house, resuming position when they left, and this went on until he died, whereupon they elected his nephew 'Umar b. Muḥammad b. Maṭraf al-Ḥuddâni. According to Muḥammad b. al-Rûḥ/Rawh, it was during his Imamate that the Qarâmiṭa invaded the interior, which implies all the other Imams date to before roughly 290/903. Then comes a curious sort of hiatus. The Qarâmiṭa seem to have returned to Bahrayn voluntarily, whereupon Abû'l-Mu'thir ordered their houses to be burnt. That decision was queried, for if they were Muslims such an act was illegal, while if they were *mushrikîn* their property became *fay*'; but Abû'l-Mu'thir justified it on the grounds that it would discourage them from returning.<sup>19</sup> Since Abû'l-Mu'thir must have been a pretty old man by then we can assume that this withdrawal occurred before the new century. But although 'Umar b. Muḥammad was still alive, he did not become Imam again, and I suspect it was now that the Ḥuddâni Abû Sa'îd al-Qarmaṭi returned to rule, with perhaps the support of a faction of the B. Sâma. Mention is then made of a couple of very minor Imams, one of whom fled, while the other resigned when the 'Sultan' established power in Bahlâ and 'Atîk (Hamra area?) and placed a garrison at Nizwâ. And that was the end of any pretence of an Imamate for at least another twenty years.

---

This reassertion of non-Ibâdi rule by 'Sultans', I would suggest, coincides with the end of Şaffarid governance and the death of Abû Sa'îd al-Jannâbi in 300. It is clear that the real interest of the Qarâmiṭa, like all outside powers, was control of Oman's maritime trade, and concern with the interior was largely confined to containing the local regime there. Abû Sa'îd al-Jannâbi's campaigns had been against Sohar and the incursion into the interior was largely a sideshow, which probably explains why the Qarâmiṭa withdrew, perhaps leaving their Ḥuddâni 'Imam' in charge. But after Abû Sa'îd died reasonable relations were established between the Qarâmiṭa and the Caliphate, and indeed in 304/916-17 the vizier 'Ali b. (p.333) 'Isâ granted them use of Sîrâf. This is the period, I suggest, when Aḥmad b. Hilâl/Khalîl established himself in Sohar as Şâhib 'Umân for six or so years. But the Qarmaṭi ambition to control Gulf trade inevitably involved Basra, which they attacked in 307, and the breach widened when 'Ali b. 'Isâ was removed from office, accused of friendship with the Qarâmiṭa, and it is now that the young Abû Ṭâhir makes his real entry onto the scene, plundering Basra in 311/923 and asserting claims to it and its Ahwâz hinterland. These he pursued by harassing the Pilgrimages and repeatedly sacking Basra and Kûfa. Like Abû Sa'îd, who claimed to be representing the Mahdi, Muḥammad b. 'Abdullâh b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya, who, he proclaimed, was due to reappear in 300, Abû Ṭâhir also predicted his imminent return and the end of the existing era. For two years he campaigned in Iraq, inflicting a crushing defeat of the Caliphate forces before returning to al-Aḥsâ in 317, the year he pillaged and killed the pilgrims at Mecca, carrying off the Black Stone.

### The Wajîhids

That it was then that he took Oman, as Ibn Khaldûn says, is borne out by numismatic evidence. In 316 we have a coin of an 'Abd al-Khâtim b. Ibrâhîm with the Caliph's name, Muqtadir, but from 317 we pass to the Wajîhids: Yûsuf b. Wajîh's coins run from 317 to 332, followed by his son Muhammad recorded in 333, followed by another son Umar b. Yûsuf, with coins between 341 and 350. This is clearly the family the Qarâmiṭa established, but whether it was of Bahrayni or Omani origin is not stated.<sup>20</sup> Yûsuf is best known in classical sources for his attack on Basra, recounted by the contemporary al-Sûli,<sup>21</sup> who tells how he attacked the Barîdis because of the excessive customs dues they were imposing on Omani shipping. The first encounter took place in the estuary near Obollah, where the Barîdis were routed, but the tables were turned when fire-ships broke up the Omani fleet, destroying six vessels. Many of the Omanis were captured, but Yûsuf himself escaped.

The Wajîhids, at certain moments, may have been quasi-independent, but their status can only be understood in terms of Sohar's trade relations. Yûsuf certainly paid tribute on occasion to the Qarâmiṭa, but he also had to maintain links with Iraq, the principal market for both luxury goods and local produce. That is why his coins bear the name of the 'Abbasid Caliph, and that too is why he attacked the local power in Basra when financial demands became too exacting. Likewise the Qarâmiṭa, (p.334) while periodically trying to take control of the international trade, needed to ensure that the Iraqi and Persian market remained open for their own produce, notably the famous dates of Hasa and the pearls of the Bahrayni waters. The Omanis similarly had interest in that trade, whatever the regime in power at Sohar, if only for the essential exchange of dates for grain; and that also was a factor which gave the coastal regime leverage over the interior (right down to the twentieth century, when penal taxes on date exports helped force settlement at the 'Treaty' of Sib in 1920). True, Sohar had some alternative markets to

---

Iraq and Fârs; in Kirmân and southern Persia, India, and increasingly along the eastern coast of Africa (see Chapter 13), but the essential trade passed by the Gulf until the overthrow of Bûyid and Caliphate rule and the rise of the Fatimids.

So during the Wajîhid period and then that of the Bûyids, when Sohar's trade reached its apogee, these commercial interests explain much about relations within the Gulf. Also relevant is that Abû Tâhir al-Qarmaṭi alienated many of his followers. By the time he invaded Oman he was effectively preaching a new religion, and in 319/923 actually handed over the rule to a young Persian from Isfahan whom he recognized as the expected Mahdi. He soon realized he had been duped and that the impostor was claiming to be the descendant of the Persian kings and was bent on restoring the Magian religion, but the affair severely damaged the movement, with the Iraqî Qarâmiṭa in Bahrayn leaving, and many tribal Arabs coming to offer their service in the 'Abbasid army, even though the Bahraynis had returned to their original belief in the hidden Mahdi. Nevertheless, Abû Tâhir continued to carry out raids on southern Iraq and the Fârs coast and obstruct the Pilgrimage, until an agreement was finally reached in 327/932 permitting it to resume against payment of a sizeable tribute. Thereafter matters calmed down, and when he died in 332/944 the remaining brothers ruled peacefully and the Black Stone was ransomed.

#### The Nizwâ party Imams

In Oman this changing situation was reflected in the restoration of a moderate Imamate in Nizwâ, sponsored by the leading 'neutralist' *âlim*, Abû 'Abdullâh Nabhân b. 'Uthmân of Samad Nizwâ, somewhere around 320/932. Their choice was Abû Qâsim Sa'îd b. 'Abdullâh, the grandson of Abû 'Abdullâh Muḥammad b. Maḥbûb al-Ruḥayli. Al-Sâlimi bases the date for his election on a report that the country was under the heel of *jabâbira* for forty years after Bûr. It makes sense, since the Imam died in 328/939-40,<sup>22</sup> and there is also a letter of his to Yûsuf b. Wajîh concerning (p.335) their respective roles.<sup>23</sup> This makes it fairly clear that he was not trying to reconquer the country (note the phrase 'with respect to our affairs and yours') but to stamp out injustices committed by Yûsuf's men, which is commensurate with the fact that he was elected '*alâ'l-difa*'. The choice of a Ruḥayli as an Imam itself speaks of the tribal neutrality necessary to achieve a following, and this was reasserted in the agreement for his successor, Râshid b. Walîd, possibly a Kindi from Samad Nizwâ. Before Râshid was actually formally elected it was agreed by the '*ulamâ*' under the leadership of Abû Muḥammad 'Abdullâh b. Muḥammad b. Abî'l-Mu'thir that they would suspend judgement over Mûsâ b. Mûsâ and Râshid. The fact that Abû'l-Mu'thir's grandson took this attitude and rallied to Abû Qâsim, who was killed in a battle at Manâqi trying to bring order in the Rustâq area,<sup>24</sup> and that he in turn died in the service of Râshid while also attempting to bring order in his own tribal territory, indicates a spirit of moderation. Furthermore, both Ibn Baraka and his pupil al-Bisyâni, although upholders of what became known as the Rustâq school, also recognized both Imams. It was only after their death, according to Abû Sa'îd al-Kudami, the great protagonist of the Nizwâ school, that the dogma propounded by the proto-Rustâq school really split the community.

This developed essentially in the interregnum between the overthrow of this Nizwân Imamate and the re-establishment of a series of new Imams, seemingly from the start of the 5/11<sup>th</sup> century. Once again the collapse of this first real attempt to restore an Imamate had resulted from a campaign associated with a change of regime on the coast, when 'Aḍud al-Dawla

established direct Bûyid control. The defeated Imam is reported in classical sources as Ḥafṣ b. Râshid, although Omani sources appear to disagree. Thereafter, Ibâḍi influence so declined that Muqaddasi<sup>25</sup> in his description of the sects stated that it was amongst those that had fallen into obscurity. The next Imam to feature in the local histories is Khalîl b. Shâdhân. Both the dating and circumstances surrounding the history of these two Imams, Ḥafṣ and Khalîl, is fraught with problems, but it is essential to try and sort these out, not only to establish the history of the second main period of Imamate history, but also to date and provide a sequential order for some major 'ulamâ' who are the principle sources for the dogma disputes as well as a huge spate of learned treatises.

**(p.336) Origins of the Rustâq-Nizwâ parties dispute**

Before doing so however, it is necessary to obtain some appreciation of how the so-called Rustâq-Nizwâ parties dispute originated, for in due course it was to have the most nefarious effects on the history of the Imamate in Oman, and to assess how far this label in fact really was applicable when the Nizwâns united behind their two Imams.

One aspect of the dispute focused on the facts concerning al-Ṣalt's deposing, and Ibn Baraka picks up a number of points concerning these in his *Muwâzana*: whether, for example, he really was deposed or resigned, surrendering the *kimma* and *khâtim* (Imam's headdress and seal) voluntarily, whether he annulled his anathema (*rafa' al-inkâr*) against Mûsâ b. Mûsâ, why he did not lead a *khurûj* against the usurper as was his duty but went and lived quietly with his son. Since what is said about these issues stems from accounts by al-Ṣalt supporters, we have little to go on to judge their validity, although Abû Qaḥṭân does indicate there may be another side to the argument. In any case such matters were not really the concern of the Nizwâ party, which was arguing from a quite different point of view. Since it is they who first managed to establish an Imamate that had a fairly wide recognition, at least in the Jawf, including by Ibn Baraka and al-Bisyâni, themselves upholders of proto-Rustaq party views, we will start with the Nizwân thesis.

Its full exposé was the work of Abû Sa'îd al-Kudami, that is, Muḥammad b. Sa'îd from Kudam, a settlement between Ḥamrâ and Bahlâ; an additional *nisba* of Salûti<sup>26</sup> may indicate the family originated from this once important settlement downstream of Bahlâ, more or less destroyed in the civil war. Interestingly, his opponents, Ibn Baraka and his pupil al-Bisyâni, also came from this same region, the former from Bahlâ, where he had an important school, and al-Bisyâni/Bisyawi from Bisyâ, a little downstream of Salût. Abû Sa'îd's main exposé is in his *K. al-Istqâma fî'l-walâya wa'l-barâ'a*, although the issues are also raised in his *K. al-Mu'tabar* and in collections of his *jawâbât* and *aḥkâm*. After an initial discussion concerning al-Ṣalt and Mûsâ, and the Imams Râshid b. al-Naẓr and 'Azzân b. Tamîm, he says (and repeats more than once) there were no divisions in *dîn al-Ibâḍiyya* (in Oman) from the time of Abû Sufyân and Wâ'il b. Ayyûb through to that of Abû 'Abdullâh, indeed to 'Azzân b. al-Ṣaqr and al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥawâri (al-Sâmi), who were like two eyes in the same head. The reason for coupling these two soon becomes apparent: 'Azzân died before the events, whilst al-Faḍl, who also had a major reputation (*ism thâbit*) in Islam, was not only involved but was a supporter of Mûsâ. Naturally, the Rustâq party does not include the latter amongst its worthies.

---

**(p.337)** Since these events, everyone has been divided into three positions (*manzila*), which Abû Sa'îd analyses over three 'generations' of '*ulamâ*'. The three leading figures of the first 'generation' (*hilf*), contemporaries of events, were the deaf Abû Jâbir Muḥammad b. Ja'far (Ibn Ja'far), the lame Abû 'Abdullâh Nabhân b. Uthmân, and the blind Abû'l-Mu'thir,<sup>27</sup> which perhaps says something about the '*ulamâ*' class. The first supported Mûsâ, the second was more or less neutral, and the third fervently gave *walâya* to al-Şalt and excommunicated (*barâ'a*) Mûsâ and Râshid: their view, Abû Sa'îd comments, has been imposed on us. What he does not explain is that Abû'l-Mu'thir was a kinsman of al-Şalt and not exactly unprejudiced, nor that Ibn Ja'far came from Izki, the home of Mûsâ's family, and had a quarrel with al-Şalt over being removed as Wali of Sohar: Abû 'Abdullâh Nabhân was the forebear of the B. Mu'ammâr<sup>28</sup> of Samad Nizwâ, which help explains his neutrality ('Aqr Nizwâ was dominated by Sâmi clans). Several names appear in the next generation. Amongst these are Abû 'Abdullâh's sons, Bashîr and 'Abdullâh, who dissociated from Mûsâ and were the main teachers of Abû Mâlik Ghassân b. Muḥammad b. al-Khaḍar, Abû Marwân Sulaymân (b. Muḥammad?) b. Ḥabîb and Abû Qaḥṭân,<sup>29</sup> the first two of whom in turn were teachers of Ibn Baraka. That would help explain why the Âl Ruḥayl remained very much acceptable to the proto-Rustâq party and why they accepted 'Abdullâh's son as the first Nizwân Imam.

A word also needs saying about another figure of this generation, Abû'l-Ḥawâri (Muḥammad b. al-Ḥawâri b. 'Uthmân al-Qarri), whose name has cropped up several times, notably over his letter to the Hadramis. From Nizwâ, he was clearly influenced by the views of his senior, Abû'l-Mu'thir. Both were scholars of considerable standing who, like Ibn Ja'far, wrote treatises that were important in the evolution of Ibâdî *fiqh* (see Chapter 12). Abû'l-Ḥawâri also recorded from Abû 'Abdullâh Nabhân b. 'Uthmân, who himself transmitted from al-Şalt. While tending to desist from the direct polemic when treating *walâya* and *barâ'a* in his *Jâmi'*, moving from a dissociating to neutral position concerning Mûsâ (although remaining adamant about damning his two Imams), he compares the '*sîra*' of the ringleaders in the civil war, 'Azzân b. Tamîm, al-Ḥawâri b. 'Abdullâh, and al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥawâri, with that of 'Ali and Mu'âwiya over 'Abdullâh b. Wahb al-Râsibi.

It is in the next 'generation' that what became known as the Nizwâ party really gelled. All lived after the events and so were arguing the positions taken by their forebears. Amongst them, Abû 'Abdullâh Muḥammad b. Rûḥ/Rawḥ al-Kindi, from (Su'âl?) Nizwâ, who was Abû Sa'îd's own **(p. 338)** teacher. Although his *Sîra* only survives through quotation, both Rustâq and Nizwâ party alike inevitably start their treatises on *walâya* and *barâ'a* with his precept that taking a position is an obligation (*farîḍa*). In other words, you cannot say, 'I don't know', except under the specific conditions of *wuqûf*. On the other hand—and here the two parties are also in agreement—it is not for every Tom, Dick, and Harry to decide, as Abû Sa'îd more or less puts it in his *Mu'tabar* (where he speaks of his teacher as deceased); the positions have been decided by Consensus, the Sunna, and the Book, and developed through three aspects (*wujûh*) of judgement (*ḥukm*): *al-ḥaqîqa*, *al-sharîṭa*, and *al-zâhir*. In the *Istiḳâma* Abû Sa'îd makes clear that the hoi-polloi only started doing so following the third generation.

Muḥammad b. Rûḥ's origins from Upper Nizwâ, like those earlier of Abû 'Abdullâh Nabhân b. Uthmân, help explain his neutrality. Originally he was one of those who dissociated from Mûsâ

and Râshid, but seeing the consequences, switched to suspending judgement, a position reinforced when Abû'l-Mu'thir's grandson also decided to suspend judgement over al-Şalt, whom his grandfather had so ferociously defended, albeit continuing to dissociate from Mûsâ. The real breakthrough occurred when the senior 'âlim at Izki, Abû Ibrâhîm Muḥammad b. Sa'îd b. Abi Bakr, joined by Ibn Ja'far's elderly son, finally decided to take a *wuqûf* stance (thereby complementing Abû'l-Mu'thir's grandson's equally important switch from the al-Şalt side) and summoned a meeting in Su'âl, whose outcome was to adopt a neutral stance under the Ruḥayli Imam, repeated when choosing his successor, Râshid b. Walîd. It was only after their Imamates, and as members of this third generation died out, that the disputes really arose and fighting became endemic, so that no one was safe, from the limits of Julfâr in the north to Raghwân in the south, neither in the barren mountains nor in the land of the Ḥuddân nor Rustâq, as Abû Sa'îd puts it. And although he does not openly accuse them, he is clearly indicating that it was, at least in part, incited by Ibn Baraka and al-Bisyâni of the next generation, who imposed the views of Abû'l-Mu'thir on the Omanis.

In fact Abû Sa'îd's work was essentially an appeal to peace and unity. Since (a) Mûsâ's party had the support of some of the most learned 'ulamâ' of his time, (b) no new facts could be established, and (c) the view of the worthy were in conflict, there was only one rightful position to adopt, abstention (*wuqûf*), he argued. Instead of keeping the old wounds open, every effort should be made to heal them through re-establishing the true Imamate, whose constitution he proceeds to analyse in the ensuing forty out of forty-six *bâbs* that make up his *Istiqâma*. 'Despite its length,' al-Sâlimi states,<sup>30</sup> 'there is benefit in every single word of it', (p.339) unlike Ibn Baraka and his pupil al-Bisyâni, whose partisanship was such that al-Sâlimi is constrained to say of them that, despite their remarkable scholarship, 'the people of Truth renounce their treatises and reject their extremism'.

He may be going a little too far. Whether their personal background prejudiced them is difficult to assess. Abû Muḥammad (the *kunya* by which he is usually referred to) 'Abdullâh b. Muḥammad b. Baraka was of B. Salîma descent and lived in the Ḍarḥ quarter of Bahlâ, the great centre in the northern Jawf where Abû'l-Mu'thir and other Kharûş had established themselves, a tribal relationship that would certainly direct him towards their extreme views. He had three teachers, Abû Marwân (see above), the Ruḥayli Imam, and his principal one, Abû Mâlik Ghassân b. Muḥammad b. al-Khaḍar.<sup>31</sup> Abû Mâlik came from the Şulân quarter of Sohar, which had been active on behalf of the Yamani party in the civil war and which also included the 'Awtabi family, and was one of the third generation who continued firmly to dissociate from Mûsâ and give *walâya* to al-Şalt. Ibn Baraka was renowned for his school, and a great benefactor to Bahlâ, leaving a large *waqf* estate. His major pupil, Abû'l-Ḥasan 'Ali b. Muḥammad, often referred to as al-Bisyâwi or al-Bisyâni but called by 'Awtabi Abû'l-Ḥasan al-Aşamm (not to be confused with al-Aşamm = Abû Muḥammad 'Uthmân b. Abi 'Abdullâh, d. 631/1234), may have been a Yaḥmadi,<sup>32</sup> and was the teacher of 'Awtabi's teacher. So the background to both proponents is associated strongly with the Yaman side, and both came from an area that had suffered particularly badly in the civil war, in whose aftermath Bahlâ had become a centre for the B. Sâma and other *salâṭîn al-jawr* to keep control of central Oman. Nevertheless, they came from the Jawf and not the Rustâq area, which was the Yaḥmad stronghold.

---



Tribal prejudice aside, however, the Rustâq party had one trump card which formed the centrepiece of their arguments, and is present in all their presentations from the time of Abû'l-Mu'thir and Abû Qaḥṭân onwards: that al-Ṣalt was a *shâri* Imam and was deposed without consultation or any evidence being promulgated of misdeeds or a chance to make a *tawba*. Abû'l-Mu'thir reinforces this argument by countering any suggestion that al-Ṣalt resigned, since he was not allowed to do so without proper consultation. A *shâri* Imam, it is generally held, may not abdicate unless there has been a major change in his intellect (*'aql*), his obedience to God's revealed law (*sam'*), or his perspicacity (*baṣr*). If (p.340) Mûsâ had studied the *âthâr* of the Muslims and comprehended their *sîra*, he would never have permitted allowing rebels, who did not know the difference between right and wrong (cf. Qur'ân XIII, 18), to form a so-called *khurûj*, claiming that al-Ṣalt was not their Imam. Al-Ṣalt was living quietly in his house and only learnt of what he was supposed to have done after the event. Abû'l-Mu'thir also completely rejects the argument about al-Wârith b. Ka'b being put forward over Ibn Abi 'Affân as a precedent.

There are two important works by Abû'l-Mu'thir relative to the dispute: his *Ṣifa*, which is largely concerned with establishing facts relevant to the arguments and the wild accusations bruited about by the unqualified, and his *Bayân wa'l-Burhân*, which deals generally with his opponents' views and the defects of Râshid, described as 'the weakest of the weak'. The former is the more interesting work, because it deals in supposed facts and was presumably written during Râshid's Imamate, for he only deals with the first part of it. Abû Qaḥṭân (Khâlid b. Qaḥṭân), writing somewhat later, also provides an essentially historical review, emphasizing that no proper Imam had been deposed in Oman. He is particularly interesting for the case of Muhannâ from whom Abû 'Abdullâh and Bashîr b. al-Mundhir secretly dissociated, but since they did not confront him, they kept quiet 'and we know of no one who dissociated from him'. But Abû Qaḥṭân is more nuanced about al-Ṣalt and his faults, admitting he became weak and doddery, but claiming there was no evidence that he lost his faculties. He also emphasizes the tolerance al-Ṣalt showed towards Mûsâ because of his father's reputation, thereby allowing the young and ambitious to further their cause. They deposed al-Ṣalt without explaining why, or offering him the chance to make a *tawba*, so he went and lived with his son Shâdhân. And if anyone says he resigned it was because he wanted to avoid bloodshed. Abû Qaḥṭân's account also pursues events further than Abû'l-Mu'thir, right down to the plethora of Imams that appeared shortly after the civil war.

Ibn Baraka in his *Muwâzana* also argues specifics. But at the same time he introduces some more interesting concepts, the distinction between *ṭarîq al-'aql* and *ṭarîq al-sam'*, implying his opponents based their view on human reasoning, like the Mu'tazili middle way, whereas revealed law was the only correct approach. In other words, however tempting a common-sense approach to the past in the interest of peace, it is not the way of the Muslims. Interestingly enough, he uses the example of the Creation of the Qu'ân. If someone consults three people, one of whom says it is created, a second it is not, and a third who says he does not know, it does not suffice to go along with any one of these positions. He must listen to the arguments, weigh them up, and then decide for himself, hence presumably the title of his work. It is an absolute duty to investigate and come to a conclusion.

---

**(p.341)** Al-Bisyâni places his arguments entirely on this level in his *Sîrat al-Su'âl* and his *radd* to Abû Sa'îd, part of which is extant. His *exposé* on *amr bi'l-ma'ruf* (in the form of a dialogue) is also relevant. In this he sees *ma'rûf* and *munkar* as mutual oppositions (the two sides of the same coin), like *walâya* and *barâ'a*. His treatment of the subject is entirely concerned with what forms the one or the other. *Walâya* and *barâ'a* have become central to his very concept of Islam. So he is not concerned with details of the dispute, but with the principle of *wuqûf*, and quotes Hâshim b. Ghaylân (via Sa'îd b. Muhriz) on when that is permitted. His distinction is between *wuqûf shakk* and *wuqûf su'âl*, whence the title of his work. He quotes Abû 'Ubayda to the effect that *al-shâkk hâlik wa'l-sâ'il ma'dhûr*, that it is excusable to pose the problem but the solution by *shakk*, that is, a judgement recommending indecision, is not. Anyone who suspends judgement on grounds of *shakk* is not a Muslim (*lâ yajûz shakk fî'l-islâm*), and he runs through all the opinions of the forebears on the subject and he totally rejects any reinterpretation (*ta'wîl*) of past rulings and events (e.g. Ibn Abi 'Affân or Muhannâ). In other words, the *âthâr* which constitute the *ijmâ'*, and form with the Qur'ân and the Sunna the basis of all judgement, is quite formal about *shakk* and anyone who finds a solution in a dubious matter (*dâ'if*) by suspending judgement when the evidence is clear or been decided by the worthy predecessors, and then proclaims this as a solution (*dâ'a ilâ al-shakk*), is damned like the Shu'aybiyya and the Murji'a. The al-Şalt affair is totally clear; he was a just *shâri* Imam, his *kufr* was never demonstrated, so *khurûj* against him was not permitted nor dissociation from him. Abû 'Abdullâh in his letter to the Hadramis had made quite clear what was and was not permitted when deposing an Imam.<sup>33</sup> So any *wuqûf* over the affair is *wuqûf shakk*. All the ills that befell Oman subsequently stemmed from that act. There has been no consensus over any Imam since that time (al-Bisyâni is particularly condemnatory of 'Azzân b. Tamîm), with the exception of the Ruḥayli Imam (A. Qâsim) Sa'îd b. 'Abdullâh and those martyred with him (he says nothing here of Râshid b. Walîd). The other righteous persons he names after the time of 'Azzân b. al-Şaqr and the Imam al-Şalt are Bashîr b. Muḥammad b. Maḥbûb and those with him, Abû Qaḥṭân, Abû Ibrâhîm (Muḥammad b. Sa'îd b. Abi Bakr), Abû Mâlik (Ghassâ n b. Muḥammad b. al-Khaḍar), and Ibn Baraka.

Two things should be noted from this suite of names. In it lies the foundations of a list of doctors of the faith who are to be referred to by the Rustâq party, and it is this which 'Awtabi develops as a chain of *ḥamalât* **(p.342)** al-'ilm who created the *madhhab* passing from God and the Prophet down to al-Bisyâni (see Chapter 14). Missing from such lists are the likes of Abû Sa'îd. On the other hand there are neutralists in al-Bisyâni's list, notably Abû Ibrâhîm. That is perhaps explained by Ibn Baraka himself in his *K. al-Taqyîd*, when he asked Abû Mâlik what the position was about someone in *walâya* who openly proclaimed (*aḡhara*) his dissociation from al-Şalt. Unequivocally his teacher replies, he too was in a state of *barâ'a*. But when Ibn Baraka pursued the issue and asked about someone declaring his position as being in *wuqûf*, he replied he was in his *walâya* so long as he was seeking to establish the truth (in other words, not *shakk*). And it is worth noting too that this teacher also declared that 'Azzân b. Tamîm deserved either *wuqûf* or *barâ'a* but he himself tended to the former until someone could convince him otherwise.

In other words, the Rustâq party view at this stage was not as extreme as it was later to become, when someone who held al-Şalt in *wuqûf* would have been excommunicated. It did not then

preclude associating with those who suspended judgement over the past so as to unify behind a worthy Imam, as when selecting the Ruḥayli Abû Qâsim. Nevertheless, the proto-Rustâq doctors did condemn a formal dogma of suspending judgement as a solution, and it was *shakk* to do so over a past affair, simply on the grounds of not having witnessed it, Abû'l-Ḥawâri insists. That is why so much of the issue concerning *walâya* and *barâ'a* in Ibâḍi literature hinges on the *shâhid*. Once the matter has been decided by the consensus of the '*ulamâ'*' (as in the case of the Caliph 'Uthmân) it devolves on their successors: it forms part of the *âthâr*, the constituent of *ijmâ'*. The Nizwâ party would argue that this was not applicable in the matter of al-Ṣalt, since there was no consensual view, either at the time or later, and so their *wuqûf* was proper. To which their opponents would reply that their proof was incontestable since al-Ṣalt was deposed without a *bayân*, that Mûsâ and those with him were not qualified to make a *khurûj*, and that their Imam was evil. In the interest of peace, the Nizwâ party was resorting to human reasoning and ignoring the essential transmitted *ijma'* concerning the Imamate and its laws.

It should also be noticed that neither Abû Sa'îd, nor Ibn Baraka and al-Bisyâni, named names in their dispute or accused their predecessors of partisanship. They were not openly condemning any individual on either side, merely the principles behind their arguments: the inference was left to be drawn from the arguments. It is fairly clear too from the *K. al-Taqyîd* that in fact many were keeping quiet about the issues and Ibn Baraka's questions to his master concerned those openly proclaiming (*aẓhar*) their views. So, as Abû Sa'îd states, it was only after this period of reconciliation, which had allowed neutralist Imams to be elected at Nizwâ, that the full development of the dogma, eventually to be labelled **(p.343)** as Rustâq, came into existence. It reached its culmination, a century-and-a-half later, in a formal *fatwa* condemning those who did not accept it to hellfire, and as we shall see, it was in reality a justification for restoring the Imamate into the hands of the Yaḥmad families that had held power until the civil war, and whose position was undermined by any doctrine that failed to recognize their rights or looked to tribally 'neutralist' Imams.

Nothing concerning the period just described indicates that the early proponents of this so-called Rustâq school supported an Imamate associated with any particular region, tribe, or the descent of the deposed Imam. On the contrary, Ibn Baraka, al-Bisyâni, and Abû Sa'îd all came from the Bahlâ area and supported two non-Yaḥmadi Imams, and they certainly did not declare that the Imamate devolved on al-Ṣalt's progeny. Far from it. It was the mutual jealousy of the Rustâq families that had caused the civil war, and the Ruḥayli Imam was killed, like Abû'l-Mu'thir al-Kharûṣi's grandson, trying to bring order in the Rustâq area. The proponents of both schools were attempting to detribalize the Imamate and maintain it at its proper capital. In other words, the label Nizwâ and Rustâq is a misnomer for the dogma dispute during the period just dealt with. Nizwâ party perhaps, but Ibn Baraka and al-Bisyâni had nothing to do with Rustâq.

#### Dating problems

To understand what changed, events of the ensuing period must be reconstructed. And it is here that the first major dating problem arises, that concerning Ḥafṣ b. Râshid's Imamate. Once again the main sources are classical, the quasi-contemporary accounts of Ibn Miskawayh and the much later histories of 'Izz al-Dîn Ibn al-Athîr (555–630/1160–1233) and Ibn Khaldûn (whose '*Ibar*' dates to the last quarter of the 8/14<sup>th</sup> century). This last's brief summary tells in a

---

nutshell how 'Aḍud al-Dawla took control of Oman. When Mu'izz al-Dawla died (356) his governor, al-Faraj b. 'Abbâs, proceeded to Baghdad and handed Oman over to 'Umar b. Nabhân al-Ṭâ'iy (who, Ibn Miskawayh says, was a native of Oman). Then the Zanj under the leadership of Ibn Ḥallâj rose up, killing 'Umar, and it was because of this that 'Aḍud al-Dawla sent his expedition (362/972-3).

There is an important preliminary, of which Ibn Miskawayh<sup>34</sup> gives interesting, but somewhat confusing, details. In 354 Mu'izz al-Dawla sent a *naqîb* to Nâfi', the Wajîhid's *mawlâ*, who gave him allegiance. This seems to be the result of Nâfi''s seizing power by killing his master (presumably the last recorded Wajîhid, 'Umar b. Yûsuf, whose coins only (p.344) go down to 350), throwing off any allegiance to the Qarâmiṭa and seeking Bûyid protection.<sup>35</sup> As a result, the Omanis revolted and called in the Qarâmiṭa, to whom they surrendered their town (Sohar), while Nafi' took refuge with Mu'izz. The Omani qadi, who was from a powerful local family, now started manoeuvring against the Bahrayni 'Ali b. Aḥmad whom the Qarâmiṭa had appointed as *kâtib* (agent), by trying to get a man whom they hoped to manipulate installed as Amîr (that is, commander of the garrison, still presumably nominally representative of the Caliph via the Bûyids): this man, Ibn Ṭughân, was clearly a close relative of the Abû Ḥarb Ṭughân whom 'Aḍud al-Dawla later sent to command the force that invaded Oman, according to Ibn Khaldûn.<sup>36</sup> But they had misjudged, for Ṭughân arrested and killed eighty of them before the Omanis finally managed to assassinate him, whereupon they more or less forced 'Abd al-Wahhâb b. Aḥmad b. Marwân, a relative of the qadi, to accept what seems to have been some sort of Sohari Imamate. Out of prudence he appointed the Qarmaṭi official as his *kâtib*, but now it was 'Ali b. Aḥmad who started intriguing, by short-changing the 6,000 Zanjis who formed the main soldiery, paying them half what was given to the whites and saying it was at the Imam's orders. When they threatened to revolt, 'Ali told them if he were in charge they would be paid equally, with the result that fighting broke out between the white and black troops, but in the end they joined together and swore allegiance to 'Ali, banishing 'Abd al-Wahhâb. It was this reassertion of Qarmaṭi authority which presumably led Mu'izz to raise a force from his Dayl amites and Turks, under Abû'l-Faraj Muḥammad b. 'Abbâs (presumably the son of Mu'izz's former governor), who joined up with 'Aḍud al-Dawla's troops. So a large fleet set sail around the end of 355/966 and took possession of the country, burning the Omani fleet of 79 ships.

There has clearly been some confusion of names and dates, and possibly two invasions of Oman, not surprisingly in the light of the complex situation that developed in Bûyid affairs at this period. It is characterized by a coin minted in Oman in 361 recorded by Vasmer (no.5) whose inscription indicates that the Zanj leader who is said to have killed 'Aḍud's provisional governor subsequently recognized both the Bûyid and the Qarâmiṭa, who had a resurgence of power in Bahrayn after the Fatimids conquered Egypt in 358/969. All of which shows the extraordinary ambivalence that existed between the Bûyids and the Qarâmiṭa, the confused rivalries of the Bûyids in their own domains, as well as with their nominal Caliphs on the one side, and the Omanis and the Qarâmiṭa on (p.345) the other. 362/972-3, however, seems to be the definitive date for the proper establishment of Bûyid power on the coast, when Abû Ḥarb Ṭughân, after fierce fighting, finally defeated the Zanj who had rallied near Rustâq. From then on, we have a suite of Omani coins with the names of Rukn al-Dawla, 'Aḍud al-Dawla and Marzbân b. 'Aḍud al-Dawla, followed by coins of 367 and 368 with the latter two names only: Marzbân (353-388)

subsequently became Şamşâm al-Dawla. The conquest of the interior seems to have occurred in the following year, for the accounts go on to say<sup>37</sup> that after the coast had been brought under control, the *shurât* (i.e. Ibâdis) joined together under an Amîr called Ward b. Ziyâd and under a Kh alifa (later designated Imam) called Ḥafş b. Râshid, and advanced on Damâ (the fortified centre controlling the Lower Batina), where a serious battle took place with al-Muṭahhar b. 'Abdullâh, whom 'Aḍud had sent by sea to deal with the rebels, and who then pursued them to Nizwâ, where another major battle occurred with Ward and many of the leaders being killed, whereupon Ḥafş made off to Yemen.

This provides the context to establish a chronology. It has recently been convincingly proved<sup>38</sup> that it was Ḥafş b. Râshid whom Ibn al-Athîr talks about in 363 when 'Aḍud al-Dawla's vizier, al-Muṭahhar b. 'Abdullâh, conquered Oman and Ḥafş fled to Yemen (southern Arabia). Miskawayh confirms he had completed his mission by 364/975, while al-Bisyâni shows it was Ḥafş who encountered al-Muṭahhar: the reason he discusses him was whether Ḥafş could become Imam again, since he was pretty dubious about his earlier election. Since Bisyâni was an adult in the time of Râshid b. Walîd, Imam *ca* 328–42, it follows his *floruit* was mid 4/10<sup>th</sup> century.

Furthermore, there is a gloss 'from outside this book' in a copy of Book X of the *Muṣannaf*<sup>39</sup> (§33) that starts: 'I asked the Imam Abû 'Umar Ḥafş b. Râshid', and he said that he had learnt (ḥafẓ) from 'Ali b. Muḥammad al-Bisyâni etc. Further on he states that Abû'l-Ḥasan (al-Bisyâni) was asked about Ḥafş b. Râshid's Imamate, who replied that from what he had learnt from those present at his election he disapproved of how things had been handled; in this reply he also makes reference to Râshid b. Walîd.<sup>40</sup> So the contemporaneity of al-Bisyâni and Ḥafş b. Râshid is beyond question. Which means that his teacher Ibn Baraka was somewhat earlier. If indeed Ḥafş was the son of an Imam called Râshid, (**p.346**) then it was Râshid b. Walîd, not Râshid b. Sa'îd al-Yahmadi (d. 445/1053), as al-Sâlimi proposes (followed by myself in the *Imamate Tradition*). That also means that since al-Bisyâni wrote a *radd* to Abû Sa'îd al-Kudami, Abû Sa'îd must be quasi contemporary, further confirmed by the fact that he is described as a prosperous figure in the time of the Nizwân Imam Abû Qâsim Sa'îd who took charge of the prisoners taken in fighting Yûsuf b. Wajîh.<sup>41</sup> That too is why Abû Sa'îd is an important informant on this Imam and about the only one for his successor Râshid b. Walîd.

On the other hand I see no reason to suppose that Ḥafş was Râshid b. Walîd's son. Al-Sâlimi recounts<sup>42</sup> the end of Râshid's Imamate at the hands of a *Sultân al-Jawf*, whom he presumes was one of the 'Abbasid *'âmil*s. Many had paid the Imam lip service awaiting the chance to be rid of him and plotting with the Sultan. The latter then advanced on the Sirr, and relentlessly drove what remained of the Imam's supporters from Bahlâ and then Kudam (the area from where Abû Sa'îd al-Kudami, Ibn Baraka and al-Bisyâni all came from) to enter the Jawf and occupy Nizwâ. Taking flight to the Wadi Nakhr (a headwater of the Wadi Bahlâ high up the *jabal*), the Imam managed to rally his followers, but they were defeated and scattered at Manah when advancing to attack Nizwâ, and the Imam fled. The Sultan seems to have been conciliatory and Râshid finally accepted his *amân*, but was also forced to attend on him, thus signaling his submission and that Oman had passed under the Sultan's control. This presumably is what is meant that while Râshid started off well he weakened (*da'afa*).<sup>43</sup> Although there is some similarity in this account with that of 'Aḍud al-Dawla's conquest, they are clearly different. Al-Muṭahhar fought the Omanis at Damâ and pursued them through the Sumâyil Gap to Nizwâ,

---

whereas here we have a force moving down the interior via Tuwâm from Sohar. The date of 20 Rab II 342/953 for Râshid's surrendering derives from a gloss to the *Bayân al-Shar'* which al-Sâlimi saw. At that time, the ruler in Sohar was 'Umar b. Yûsuf al-Wajîhi and the Caliph al-Mu'î', but Bûyid rule was still divided, with Mu'izz in Baghdad and 'Aḍud in Fârs, while Qarmaṭi pretensions seem to have been quiescent. So the Wajîhid may well have put an end to an independent ruler in the interior and brought the whole of Oman under his sway. Since the sources are quite specific that all Imamate government came to an end from that date, we may assume that Ḥafṣ was neither a successor of Râshid b. Walîd, nor indeed that he emerged on the scene until several, perhaps even twenty years after he lost power.

The confusion of Ḥafṣ with the successor to the Imam Râshid b. Sa'îd (**p.347**) who in the mid 5/11<sup>th</sup> century evicted the Bûyids and drove out the last of the Qarâmiṭa may stem from the tradition that this Râshid was succeeded by his son. But the assumption it was Ḥafṣ might be because they were indeed related. We know nothing of Ḥafṣ's genealogy, but Râshid b. Sa'îd was a Yaḥmadi from Sawni and probably a Kharûṣi. If Ḥafṣ was a leader in the mountains at the time of the Bûyid invasion and fought them in the Ghadaf, as the classical sources indicate, then it is quite likely he too was a Yaḥmadi and equally probably a Kharûṣi. In which case the two may have come from the same clan and that would of itself reinforce the idea of their being related. And if Râshid b. Sa'îd did have a son called Ḥafṣ...!

All that explain some of al-Bisyâni's reservations about him. Had Ḥafṣ succeeded Râshid b. Walîd, whom Ibn Baraka and al-Bisyâni had recognized, then one would expect some mention to have survived in the polemic concerning the validity of his election. But there is none, which further confirms there was no successor to the Nizwan Imams. Ḥafṣ was probably little more than a tribal leader who rallied resistance to the Bûyids following their invasion, twenty or so years after Râshid b. Walîd had submitted to the Wajîhid. His claim to be Imam did not meet the criteria of the Nizwan '*ulamâ*' either then, or when he returned; any more than three quarters of a century later did Râshid b. Sa'îd's son, whatever his name.

### Bûyid rule

Details of the Bûyid (Buwayhid) period need not concern us.<sup>44</sup> Oman remained under their direct rule during 'Aḍud, and then Şamşam al-Dawla's time, although the latter lost position in Baghdad. It was fairly early on in the reign of his successor Bahâ' al-Dawla (388-403/998-1012) that a vassal ruler was appointed in Oman from a family with close Bûyid connections, generally referred to as the Mukramids. Abû Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn b. Mukram (or Mukarram) took office sometime in the first five years of the eleventh century AD,<sup>45</sup> and in 401/1010-11 added Kirmân to his governate.<sup>46</sup> He was succeeded by his son Abû'l-Qâsim 'Ali, after his father was called to act as Sulṭân al-Dawla's vizier sometime before 415/1024-5. Abû'l-Qâsim, seems generally to have enjoyed a good reputation and became a strong supporter of Abû Kâlîjâr, who finally ended up governor of Fârs. The essential feature for us is that this 'dynasty' was local. Although helped to power by the Bûyids, it became quasi-independent. That means it was part of the Omani tribal nexus and (**p.348**) understood the conventions of its society. Just who they might be is something that will be discussed in Chapter 13.

The Mukramids remained in position until 433/1040-1, when Oman was again placed under direct Bûyid rule by Abû Kâlîjâr as a result of a succession dispute that ended up with a revolt,

following Abû'l-Qâsim 'Ali's death in 428/1036-7. An expedition reoccupied Sohar in 433/1041-2, and after Abû Kalijâr died (442/1048) the administration passed to his son Abû'l-Muzaffar. By this time the Bûyid dynasty was itself nearing its end and collapsed in Oman after the Imam Râshid b. Sa'îd took Sohar in 442/1050-1.

Which brings us back to what was happening in the interior and the second dating problem, the re-establishment of the 'Second' major period of Imamate rule in the country's history.

#### The second Imamate: al-Khalîl b. Shâdhân

This apparently started with al-Khalîl b. Shâdhân, for whom al-Sâlimi proposes the dates of 407-25, though the first date is sometimes given as a bit after 400, the second because Râshid b. Sa'îd ruled for twenty years and died definitely in Muḥ. 445/1053. Khalîl's existence is proved by some seventy-three coins found at the Bahlâ fort's mosque in 2001. This horde also includes seven coins struck in the Imam Râshid b. Sa'îd's name and three Bûyid coins (two Şamşam and one Bahâ') plus an 'Abbasid dirham from al-Saffâh's time. What is interesting about them, as Al-Salmi (2008) points out, is that their style and inscriptions were clearly inspired by Bûyid influence and probably struck to assert Omani independence.<sup>47</sup> But it is also worth noting that these Imams appear to be the only two ever to have issued coinage, and the fact that they did so is peculiar to the period. Unfortunately Khalîl's coins bear no date, but at least one of Râshid's has a legible year, 444/1052-3, which is consistent with the written evidence. I would tentatively suggest that the plethora of Khalîl's coins perhaps indicates they were struck in the interior, before Omani power was re-established at Sohar by Râshid, who celebrated his victory by dating his rule, and they were hidden shortly after.

Al-Baṭṭâshi<sup>48</sup> has proposed a radical change in the ordering and dating sequence, with Râshid b. Sa'îd dying in 445 and Khalîl succeeding him from 447 to about 474, followed by Râshid b. 'Ali (Imam 475-513). It was Khalîl, he states, who provided support for Abû Ishâq Ibrâhîm b. Qays (p.349) al-Hamdâni al-Ḥaḍrami in his war with the Şulayḥid ('Ali b. Muḥammad al-Şulayḥi) who appears on the scene propagating the Fatimi *da'wa* in Yemen in 453/1062. Abû Ishâq himself becomes independent of the Omani Imams in 454.

I go along with this modern Omani historian in two matters. First, that Râshid was not succeeded by Ḥafş, as already discussed, though that does not preclude a succession by his son. Second, that Khalîl could not be the grandson of the Imam al-Şalt. Al-Sâlimi's proposed dates of 407-25 for a vigorous Imam whose father was very much an active adult in 272/886 stretches all credibility. In fact I believe, like Baṭṭâshi, that Khalîl's genealogy has been compressed and suggest he was the Imam al-Şalt's great-grandson, Khalîl b. Shâdhân [b. al-Şalt?] b. Shâdhân b. al-Imam al-Şalt b. Mâlik. Other than this however, I find little merit in Baṭṭâshi's revision, for the whole argument essentially hangs on the dating of the Şulayḥi and the assumption that it was Khalîl who supported Abû Ishâq in his campaign against him. Briefly my own argument is that Abû Ishâq recognized both Omani Imams and specifically speaks of them in the order Khalîl, to whom he sent a delegation, and Râshid. But the essential fact that is ignored by Baṭṭâshi and subsequent Omani historians, is a statement by Abû Ishâq, explaining that he broke off relations with the Omanis because of their new extreme Rustâq dogma. That obviously refers to Râshid's decree of 443/1052, issued shortly before his death to ensure a quasi hereditary

succession. Thereafter Abû Ishâq himself became Imam, successfully pursuing his campaigns independently, until he came up against the Şulayḥi (*see below*).

It was Abû Ishâq's father who had started the move to re-establish Ibâḍi rule in the Hadramawt and it may have been this that led the Hadramis to ask the advice of Abû Zakariyyâ' Yaḥyâ b. Sa'îd (d. 472/1079–80), who held a position under Khalîl and then became Râshid's Qadi. He replied counselling the virtues of patience, and advising that *taqiyya* involved not only acts, but a smooth tongue (the opposite of the *shâri* idea). In order to protect the property (palms) of the orphans from the *jabâbira* it was perfectly acceptable to tell a white lie and say it belonged to the mosque or was for *sabîl* (*Allâh*).<sup>49</sup> This low-key approach is confirmed by Abû Ishâq himself in his *Dîwân*:<sup>50</sup> 'I turned away from it despairing, for Oman was gripped in confusion because of the foreigners' (p.350) tyranny; then I lacked the desired [troops] and did not find [support], only those who humiliated me with a few dirhams.' But when he visited Oman after Khalîl had established his position, he was given money and troops and was able to switch into *shâri* mode, and in two weeks brought back much of the Hadramawt into the Ibâḍi fold, acting as the Omani Imam's '*âmil*, the position he also held when Râshid succeeded.<sup>51</sup> For nine years and a month during their Imamates Abû Ishâq and his father continued to fight, winning a notable victory at Daw'an.

Before discussing this further, a fortuitous piece of external evidence concerning the existence of an Imam in Nizwâ around the turn of the fourth and fifth centuries AH should be noted. The Ismâ'îli writer Ḥamîd al-Dîn al-Kirmânî speaks of a current pretender to the Imamate at Nizwâ during the reign of the sixth Fatimid Caliph al-Ḥâkim (386–411/996–1021), whom he names as 'Amr al-Nizwânî.<sup>52</sup> That could just possibly refer to Ḥafṣ b. Râshid, whose *kunya* was Abû 'Umar, if indeed he was restored as Imam after returning from 'Yemen'; if so, it could only have been in the early part of al-Ḥâkim's reign, for Ḥafṣ was active at the start of the 360s. Otherwise, it either refers to Khalîl, or some totally unknown Imam. Baṭṭâshi says nothing about any Imam before Râshid, and indeed says virtually nothing about his beginnings.

There is one other important pointer to Khalîl's dates, the statement that the 'Turks' invaded Oman and took Khalîl prisoner, but subsequently released him (ransomed?), whereupon the man who had replaced him, Muḥammad b. 'Ali, resigned and he regained the Imamate. That could refer to the Bûyids, whose soldiery included Turks, Daylamites and Zanj; but equally it might indicate the Saljuqs, in which case it would certainly mean that he lived after Râshid. The former makes sense if Khalîl had tried to profit from the uncertainty during the period of the rivalry between Abû'l-Fawâris and Abû Kâlîjâr, during which Abû Muḥammad b. Mukram, was executed and his son Abû'l-Qâsim helped Abû Kâlîjâr. The latter finally won out around 415, and it was perhaps in reasserting Mukramid authority in Oman that Khalîl was captured, or fell into the hands of a Bûyid patrol. Had it been during direct Bûyid rule, there is little doubt that the head of a 'Khâriji' Imam would have been sent to Baghdad! So this piece of evidence can be argued both ways.

Nevertheless, since we know from an outside source that there was an Imam in Nizwâ somewhere between 386 and 411 and that Abû Ishâq in Hadramawt only mentions Khalîl and Râshid as Omani Imams, it is logical to presume that there was some sort of Imamate in the interior before Râshid. Furthermore, from what we do know, it was Khalîl who was fighting to



assert Imamate authority, which is why Abû Zakariyyâ' (p.351) first counselled *taqiyya* for the Hadrami Ibâḍis, but was then able to help them with a little money, and finally after Abû Ishâq's visit with some *shurât*. This visit is described twice in his *Dalâ'il*, once when he attended Friday prayers with the Imam Khalîl b. Shâdhân at Nizwâ, and again when he went with the Imam's forces, which advanced for twenty days towards Sohar as far as Şahm. And it is on the back of Khalîl's success in the interior that Râshid was able to build, and finally take, Sohar.

Furthermore, there was opposition to recognizing Khalîl. The leading 'âlim of Manaḥ, Nijâd b. Ibrâhîm (grandfather of Abû Muḥammad Nijâd. b. Mûsâ 451-513, who helped depose Râshid b. 'Ali in 496/1103) is stated to have rallied (*wala*) Khalîl,<sup>53</sup> indicating that he did not originally support him, and there is also evidence that his conduct had not always been totally admirable. In the exposé by the Qadi 'Abû 'Abdullâh Muḥammad b. 'Isâ on the Imam *âlim wa ghayr 'âlim* (see Chapter 12) there is discussion over the issue of a *tawba* being made before electing an Imam chosen for political reasons, and that there should be a lapse of three days between such a declaration of repentance for past misdeeds and the election, as in the case of Khalîl b. Shâdhân. Furthermore, his Qadi, the most distinguished scholar of his time, Abû 'Ali al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad of 'Aqr Nizwâ<sup>54</sup> (see below), had himself been asked by his pupils to accept the Imamate, but had refused, which perhaps indicates that the Nizwâns were in favour of a neutralist Imam but had been persuaded by factional interests to choose a direct descendant of the Imam al-Şalt. If so, then it may be now that the dogma over al-Şalt's deposing took a new turn and became slanted towards supporting the Kharûş or other Yaḥmad of the Rustâq area.

#### Râshid b. Sa'îd al-Yaḥmadi

However, another of al-Sâlimi's assumptions needs reconsideration: although he has found no date for Râshid's election, he argues that since he succeeded Khalîl and his Imamate lasted twenty years, then Khalîl died in 425.

We know little of Râshid's background beyond his being a Yaḥmadi whose home was at Sawni ('Awâbi), which might suggest he was a Kharûşî, and that he was elected a *shâri* Imam. That clearly indicates something had changed for the Omanis to specify *jihâd*. Once again we must look to outside sources for clues, Ibn al-Athîr read conjointly with (p.352) Ibn Khaldûn.<sup>55</sup> Assuming that their Ibn Râshid is our Râshid b. Sa'îd, he first appears on the scene causing trouble in Abû Qâsim's time (i.e. before 428/1036). It was perhaps after the Mukramid governor had dealt with him that a certain Murtaḍî, who was almost certainly himself an Omani from the interior, was appointed as his representative (*kâtib nâ'ib*) in the 'mountains'. This preliminary revolt is commensurate with the report that Râshid ruled twenty years. Further occasion to establish position occurred in the three years following Abû Qâsim's death. The evil genius manipulating the Mukramid succession had been his military commander, Ali b. Haṭṭâl, who ended up guardian of Abû Muḥammad, the surviving brother and still a minor. It was his misrule that led Abû Kâlîjâr to persuade Murtaḍî to revolt and send him a supporting force from Basra. Murtaḍî gathered support on an oath against 'Ali and won over most of the Omanis. After 'Ali was assassinated the young Abû Muḥammad came into his inheritance, but a couple of years later he in turn tried to throw off Bûyid allegiance, and it was that which led Abû Kâlîjâr to send an army from Fârs to reoccupy Sohar. The weakening position of the Bûyids and the corrupt and oppressive governance of Abû'l-Muzaffar b. Abi Kâlîjâr's representative (*khâdim*) led the people to gather around Ibn Râshid (Râshid b. Sa'îd) and attack Sohar. They were driven off in the first

---

attack, but in the next were helped by the Soharis themselves (ahl *al-balad*) and took possession of the country, killing the *khâdim* and many Daylamites, dispossessing their governors, and destroying their *imâra*. In Sohar the illegal taxes (*mukûs*) were abolished and the proper *zakât* and *jizya* regime re-established, luxury gave way to 'dressing in wool', a major new mosque was built, and the *khuṭba* given in the name of the Imam who adopted the title al-Râshid Billâh.

Of all this the Omani sources say nothing, but that they took possession of Sohar is quite clear from the letter of instructions the Imam wrote to Abû al-Mu'allâ Qaḥṭân b. Muḥammad b. al-Qâsim, appointing him a sort of military governor, in charge of protecting and maintaining order in Sohar and its surrounding area from al-'Aqq to Ṣulân; but also making clear that law and government (*ḥukûma*) was entirely the affair of the Qadi.<sup>56</sup> There is also the evidence of his coin dated 444 (i.e. the year before his stated death-date), one of several in which he is designated as Imam. I would suggest that in fact Râshid was not originally elected a *shâri* Imam, but emerged as a leader, rather as Khalîl had, with the populace rallying to him. It was only in the final phase, ending up with the attacks on Sohar, that he was formally vested with *shâri* powers. What the Omanis sources add to all this is fragmentary. Râshid, like Khalîl, was recognized by the **(p.353)** Hadramis, and as well as giving Abû Ishâq support he took the war to Bahrayn in alliance with the 'Uqaylids.<sup>57</sup> It was the fact that he joined forces with an 'illegitimate' regime that probably lay at the root of a certain amount of criticism, but the surviving correspondence indicates that he was a strict observer of the Ibâḍî code at home (as is also confirmed by Ibn Khaldûn's description). He also proselytized overseas, and we have his letter to the leading figures in al-Manṣûra in Sind.<sup>58</sup> Its interest lies in the fact it has no indication that it comes from an Ibâḍî. It simply expounds the true path and threatens eternal hellfire for those who reject it. There is nothing in it to which any good Muslim could object, and no overt political propaganda, other than to reject the rule of *jab-âbira*. Presumably it was a reminder to those who had subscribed to Ibâḍism not to lapse. But while it exhorted a fairly fundamentalist return to what Ibn Khaldûn characterizes as 'dressing in wool', it was hardly a political call to revolt.

Unfortunately, Râshid undid all this good work by summoning a conclave in the year following his capture of Sohar and issuing a decree (Shawwâl 443/1052) formally excommunicating all those who failed to recognize the extreme Rustâq dogma concerning Mûsâ b. M ûsâ and Râshid b. al-Nazar and that those who expressed *shakk* (i.e. the Nizwâ party) were condemned to hellfire. It was the start of real trouble, as al-Sâlimi states. It is significant that this decree was issued at his home in Sawni and not at Nizwâ, his official residence, where he died not long after. Quite clearly the summons was to those he knew would support his plans. Absent from this conclave were prominent figures who were to play an important part in subsequent events, notably Mûsâ b. Nijâd, the Qadi of Manaḥ, Adam, and Sinaw who subsequently led the opposition and deposed Râshid's successor (or successor but one), as too the extremely prominent Qadi of the Sumâyil area, al-Khaḍar b. Sulaymân<sup>59</sup> from the B. al-Nazar (Qudâ a), a forebear of the famous Ibn al-Nazar al-Dîni. It was clearly a move to prepare his succession and that, as will be discussed in the next chapter, was probably his son, the man confused with the earlier Ḥafṣ b. Râshid.

**(p.354)** It is also worth noting that a certain cult developed around Râshid. The *K. al-Taqyîd* not only quotes him, but incorporates him (or someone has) in al-Bisyâni's list of those accorded

*walâya*, which includes the Imams of Oman from al-Wârith to al-Şalt. This is not only a total anachronism, but indicates insertion by a member of the extreme Rustâq school who wrote following Râshid's decree, a *fatwa* to which neither Ibn Baraka nor his pupil al-Bisyâni would, or could, have subscribed. Further controversy arose after Râshid died at Nizwâ a couple of years later, when the leading Qadi who signed the Sawni proclamation decreed that the *shirâ'* he had been endowed with continued for his successor, while another, also a signatory, deemed the opposite.<sup>60</sup>

It was at this stage, when a successor was being chosen, possibly by hereditary right and certainly by some sort of clan precedence, that the Hadrami leader broke away from the Omanis, declaring:

The Omanis fight the wars we fight, our peaces are their peaces ... our legal opinions are their legal opinions, and our pronouncements over what happened between the Omanis from the time of the deposing of al-Şalt to 'Azzân b. Tamîm's time is their pronouncement ... But if some particular group [now] makes a decision about *walâya*, *barâ'a*, and *wuqûf* it has no validity unless it is proved and agreed by all. We are not covered by this judgement.<sup>61</sup>

This statement is clearly unknown to Baṭṭashi (and other modern Omani historians), who argue largely from what the Hadrami historian Ba Wazîr writes, and conclude that it must have been Khalîl who helped Abû Ishaq against the Şulayḥid. This is doubly curious, for Khalîl is reported to have helped, reluctantly at first, as one might expect if he himself were not in a strong position, whereas we know that Râshid was a full-blown *shâri* Imam and when he died left Oman in a strong position (albeit not for long). It seems clear to me that Khalîl must have aided at the beginning of the Hadrami uprising against the *jabâbira*, not the end. But now, in the wake of Rashid's death and the claims of the extreme Rustaq party, Abû Ishâq broke away, and as an independent Imam carried the war beyond the confines of Hadramawt, raiding India by sea and moving against Yemen by land.

There only remained for me the Şulayḥi. He also [like the Bûyids] was helped by outsiders; the tribes had deserted him for us when they saw their leader engaged in battle; we were marching on him with our army, but he was wiliier than the Daylamite kings [Bûyids]; he feared me because of my numbers and what I (**p.355**) brought to the oppressors and took recourse in Mişr [the Fatimids]; whilst his deputation was on its way to Egypt so was mine coming...<sup>62</sup>

This clearly refers to 'Ali b. Muḥammad al-Şulayḥi, the founder of the dynasty (of Hamdân origins) who converted to Ismâ'îlism and about 439/1047 took possession of Şan'â' and Upper Yemen. It was presumably during the ensuing period that Abû Ishâq attacked him, but without the help of the Omanis it spelled more or less the end of the Imamate in Hadramawt, for by 455/1063 the Şulayḥi had established control of Lower Yemen, including Hadramawt.<sup>63</sup>

The Imamate in the second half of the 5/11<sup>th</sup> century

What happened after Râshid death is therefore a mystery, but fairly clearly there was a disputed succession. There are two misleading pieces of information in al-Sâlimi's reconstruction that

---

distort the picture. The first, as we now know, is that he was not succeeded by Ḥafṣ, but that does not preclude a son, as the tradition states, even though his name was not necessarily Ḥafṣ, and it may well be that he succeeded without election, as recorded. Some support for such a thesis comes from a *fatwa* of Abû Bakr Aḥmad b. 'Umar b. Abi Jâbir al-Manaḥi, a leading figure of the time, who was very much concerned with the issue of *da'if* Imams and maintained that an Imam does not have to be formally elected if he enjoys general support: Al-Salmi remarks that this *sîra* is always juxtaposed to that of al-Bisyâni concerning Ḥafṣ.<sup>64</sup> The next Imam for whom the *Tuḥfa* gives a biography is Râshid b. 'Ali. We do not know his tribal *nisba*, nor when and how he was elected, but he lived in Rustâq, which suggests he was of the Yaḥmadi family that held the lordship (*malik*, pl. *mulûk*) there. All that al-Sâlimi can find relevant to his dating is his *tawba* of 12 Rabi' II 472/1078. That, as I will show, is most unlikely and the variant reading cited in the Kâshif edition gives the same date, but with the year as 492, that is, twenty years later: this makes a great deal more sense, since he died in 513 (see below). It also explains the record of an Imam 'Âmir b. Râshid b. Walîd al-Kharûṣi<sup>65</sup> having been elected in 476, one of three al-Sâlimi says he can find little about, other than that he was the last of the Kharûṣi *shâri* Imams, and that he seems to have died in office.

There are four other pieces of information that help get some perspective on matters. The first is that the Omanis' triumph under Râshid b. Sa'îd (**p.356**) was short-lived. The Saljuq Qâwurd/Qâvurd effectively became ruler of Kirman in 440/1048, and while abandoning Fârs (where Sîrâf in any case was in serious decline and many of its merchants had long since moved to Sohar), was very much concerned with maintaining the transit trade through Kirman to Seistan, and keeping the routes open to India and the Gulf. Having dealt with the Baluch, who had profited from the disorders following the collapse of Bûyid rule to occupy the *garmsîr* (warm lands: presumably the Makran coast), he requisitioned ships from the Prince of Hormuz and reoccupied the coast of Oman, most probably in the early 450s. His control was sufficiently strong for him to offer to withdraw there after he had been captured by his nephew Mâlik Shah in 466/1074; and despite uprisings in the interior the coast remained in Saljuq hands until 1140.<sup>66</sup> I shall be discussing the shifts in Oman's maritime commerce during this period in Chapter 13, and it suffices here to note that such Imams as existed were once again, as during the Bûyid period, in the mountainous interior. Almost certainly the Imamate was intermittent and clearly torn by rivalry.

The second is that Abû Zakariyyâ Yaḥyâ b. Sa'îd was killed in 472, the same year as Râshid b. 'Ali supposedly made his *tawba*, though there is absolutely nothing in this (if indeed that were the right date) to indicate he was responsible. Abu Zakariyyâ' was the leading '*âlim* of the time, a highly respected figure, and author of a large work for Qadis entitled *al-Ayḍaḥ (fî'l-aḥkâm)*,<sup>67</sup> to which a *Ziyâda* was added by the leading Qadi of Manaḥ, Abû Muḥammad Nijâd b. Mûsâ, who was rising to prominence and was to lead a rebellion against Râshid b. 'Ali. Abu Zakariyyâ was Râshid b. Sa'îd's Qadi and had previously been appointed by Khalîl,<sup>68</sup> probably after the death of Abû 'Ali al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. 'Uthmân of 'Aqr Nizwâ, who, Anon. A states, held that post. He, it will be remembered, was considered the most learned man of his time and favoured by some for the Imamate itself: amongst his pupils was Muḥammad b. Ibrâhîm al-Kindi, the author of the *Bayân al-Shar'*, who died in 508/1115. That Abu Zakariyyâ' was also the Imam Râshid b. Sa'îd's Qadi is shown by the author of the *Muṣannaf*, who found a letter in the hand of

---

the Imam addressed to the Wali of Manaḥ, passing on **(p.357)** word for word Abu Zakariyyâ's opinion. There is also extant a long letter by Abu Zakariyyâ (with the honorific? title of al-Imam) to Abû 'Abdullâh Muḥammad b. Ṭâlût al-Nakhali, in which he mentions that the Imam (name unspecified) and the Qadi Abû Bakr (Aḥmad b. 'Umar b. Abi Jâbir al-Manaḥi, who with the Qadi Nijâd later led the abortive revolt against Râshid b. 'Ali) had already written to him about the Nakhali's suggestion that Aḥmad b. al-Ṣalt should be put in charge of his tribe, the Bani Kharûṣ, and run the district. Absolutely not, he affirms! He was *min ahl al-zulm wa'l-nifâq wa'l-jawr wal-shiqâq*

This special status which the Nakhali had been wanting to accord the Bani Kharûṣ by placing them under a leader whose name is suggestive of the descent of al-Ṣalt is interesting, for Nakhali takes its nickname Shâdhân from the Shâdhân b. al-Ṣalt family.<sup>69</sup> It is more than probable they continued to have pretensions to the Imamate after the death of Khalîl b. Shâdhân, as witness the letter sent by the Imam (Abû?) 'Abd al-Raḥmân Muḥammad b. Mâlik b. Shâdhân to the corrupter Sa'îd b. Râshid b. 'Ali and those he led astray, in which he refutes the claim of Râshid b. 'Ali's son to be Imam, saying he was not of the true people of the *imâma* and threatening war, justifying himself by quoting the *K. al-Muḥâraba*.

Herein lies the key to the general situation. The Yaḥmad as a whole remained the most powerful tribal group in central Oman, and thanks to Râshid b. Sa'îd had declared Rustâq party dogma absolute, thereby effectively justifying their dynastic rule as the true successors of the First Imamate. Basic Rustâq dogma was also recognized by the leading '*ulamâ'* in the Jawf, where its opponents had no support: the B. Sâma were without the pale, whilst the Ḥuddân were the implacable enemies of any Rustâq party Imamate, whence intermittent warfare between the two in the SIRR and northern Oman. So the '*ulamâ'* had no choice but to look to the Ghadaf for leadership. But there were three different groupings promoting themselves: the lords of Rustâq, led by Râshid b. 'Ali, the Kharûṣ of Sawni, and the Kharûṣi Shâdhân b. al-Ṣalt descent in Nakhali. I think al-Sâlimi somewhat distorts the problem when he puts the issue in terms of extreme Rustâq party dogma alone. There was no other party. What was at stake was the true Imamate, hence the problem: from which of these three groups to select, since none had anything particular to recommend it? That was the great concern of the qadi al-Khaḍar b. Sulaymân in Sumâyil, and the qadis Abû Bakr Aḥmad and Nijâd at Manaḥ, which seems to have become the main centre of the Jawf '*ulamâ'* at this time. So the issue became that of the *ḍa'îf* (defective) Imam, and the person who **(p.358)** wrote the definitive work on *al-farq bayn al-imâm 'âlim wa ghayr 'âlim* was Abû 'Abdullâh Muḥammad b. 'Isâ al-Sirri.

Matters had come to a head in Râshid b. 'Ali's time. Recognized as Imam in the Rustâq area, he had started bringing the SIRR area under his control, committing acts in the process that ran counter to Ibâdî principles. As a powerful leader who was restoring order to the country, the '*ulamâ'* were inclined to acknowledge him as a *ḍa'îf* Imam, but it was the Sirri qadi, where Râshid's depredations had been most serious, who laid down the conditions (*shurûṭ*). The first step was for the candidate to make a genuine *tawba* for past misdeeds (*aḥdâth*) and sins (*dhunûb*). So Râshid made a *tawba 'alâ 'aml* to the qadi Abû 'Ali al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad b. Naṣr of Hijâr Rustâq (d. 502 or 503), witnessed also by the Manahi Abû Bakr Ahmad b. 'Umar (d. 502/1199).<sup>70</sup> The influence of the other Manahi qadi, Nijâd b. Mûsâ (d. 513/1119, aged 62), is

evident from the fact that Râshid specifically repents for having deserted the path he had instructed him in. The specifics include his campaign in the SIRR and Sunanyna (where houses had been burnt, etc.), followed by a list of property he had acquired through unwonted pressure from various people (at Firq, etc.). One has the impression that the reproach over his campaign in the SIRR was less to do with what he did but how he did it. However, it is not at all certain that Abû 'Abdullâh Muḥammad al-Sirri was satisfied by this *tawba*, to judge by his long comments, and seemed at best to await proof of reform.

In any case, the '*ulamâ*' were quickly disillusioned and the two Manaḥi qadis led an expedition to attack Rustâq in 496/1103, but were driven off. So their choice for Imam became Muḥammad b. Abi Ghassân al-Kharûsi.<sup>71</sup> Who exactly he was is also a puzzle,<sup>72</sup> but al-Sâlimi is inclined to think he was a son of Râshid b. Sa'îd, to whom the Hadrami Abû Ishâq Ibrâhîm gives the *kunya* of Abû Ghassân. We know Râshid b. Sa'îd came from Sawni and was therefore probably a Kharûsi, and the possibility of Muḥammad being a son is enhanced if indeed he turns out to be the same as the Imam Muḥammad who perhaps died in 510 and was succeeded by his son Khanbash b. Muḥammad al-Kharûsi. However, there are conflicting accounts of Khanbash's dates and I am inclined to **(p.359)** believe these two Imams are of the alternative dating, towards the middle of the century. Whoever he was, Muḥammad b. Abi Ghassân seems to have won support from at least part of the Yaḥmad and the Batina population, to whom he wrote a letter of fulsome praise, and was recognized as a *ḍa'îf* Imam by some of the '*ulamâ*' there, before moving on to Sumâyil where his Imamate was confirmed (hence the *Sîra fî iqrâr al-Imâm Muḥammad b. Abi Ghassân*). Thereupon he marched on Nizwâ, where he was recognized by Upper (Samad) Nizwâ but defied by the B. Ziyâd of 'Aqr Nizwâ, that is, the quarter in which lay the Imam's fort.

This resistance is indicative of the old civil-war enmities, for the B. Ziyâd were the shaikhly clan of the B. Nâfi' from which came the family of the original Sâmi missionary, whose grandson had called on the Caliphate authorities to revenge the Battle of al-Qâ'. A siege followed in which reprehensible tactics were used, leading to an exchange between Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Şâliḥ and his pupil, Aḥmad b. 'Abdullâh (the author of the *Muṣannaf*), who wrote a long *sîra* justifying the actions taken. It is an extremely interesting exposé concerning past campaigns from the time of the Caliph Abû Bakr right through to Râshid b. Sa'îd in Oman and Abû Ishâq Ibrâhîm b. Qays in the Hadramawt. The dispute over what is permitted focuses on two matters: *ghanîma*, and what may be done to reduce the enemy. So we see the inevitable customs of tribal warfare causing problems, raiding camels and stealing horses, making off with equipment for livestock and wells, and so on; reprehensible, Aḥmad b. 'Abdullâh agrees, and such plunder should be returned, but no thing much more can be done other than to condemn (*ankar*) such practices. On his side, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Şâliḥ considered the tactics used were excessive and in default of those laid down by Abû'l-Ḥawâri in his letter to the Hadramis and in contradiction to the terms the late Sirri qadi stipulated in his *sîra* on the *ḍa'îf* Imam; if it was necessary to make war it was not in this way, he declares. Aḥmad b. 'Abdullâh rejects these accusations (hence the title *Sîrat al-barâra*) and quotes extensively the authentic work on warfare, the *K. al-Muḥâraba* by Abû'l-Mundhir Bashîr b. Abi 'Abdullâh, who laid down the conduct permitted in restoring order and fighting the *jabâbira*. This, he claims, gave latitude for *tar'îq* and *tahrîq* (killing and burning), laying siege to forts, and cutting off supplies (including *falaj* water) in warfare; and we

---

have already noted that Abû'l-Mu'thir had recourse to the dubious act of burning the Qarâmita houses, as Abû'l-Ḥawâri admitted. But, says Bashîr, while victory is not possible without killing, all should be done with circumspection, so it is preferable to take prisoners rather than to kill. Similarly, cutting and filling in of *aflâj* should not be tolerated unless it is the only way the Muslims can achieve success. The *Muṣannaf* author tries to excuse the Imam by saying that he did condemn the filling-in of the *aflâj*. (p.360) Nevertheless, one has the impression that the campaign had indeed been excessive and that the conduct of the Imam, albeit now confirmed in his authority and no longer *ḍa'îf*, was still somewhat reprehensible.

There is nothing further about this Imam, unless he turns out to be the same as the father of Khanbash, in which case he may have died in 510. What we do learn is that Râshid b. 'Ali came to Nizwâ and drove off an attack by the Qadi Nijâd in 512, and finally engineered his death in Rajab 513/1119; a couple or so months later Râshid returned home and died.<sup>73</sup>

We have now covered something like a century of the 'Second Imamate'. Politically it was far less important than the First and seems only to have had only one moment of short-lived glory, under Râshid b. Sa'îd, who himself sowed the seeds of serious discord with his promulgation of extreme Rustâq-school dogma, which effectively justified his own tribe's claims to the Imamate. After him affairs disintegrated rapidly, and following the events just described the Imamate only survived in increasingly small pockets (see Chapter 13). But while the Imamate itself was of ever less importance, the development of Ibâḍî learning seems to have reached new heights during these disturbed conditions and finally emerged as a '*madhhab*'. How far this was a reaction to the events outlined in this chapter will be the subject of investigation for the next chapter.

Notes:

(1) Al-Sâlimi elaborates on them in *Tuḥfa*, i. 196-215.

(2) Aḥmad al-Kindi, *K. al-Ihtidâ'*, who reviews this and other complaints.

(3) *Tuḥfa*, i, 244.

(4) This detail is found in the *Kashf*.

(5) 'Awtabi's account makes perfectly clear they were 'Abdi and not their homonyms from the 'Âmir b. Ṣa'ṣa'a, as al-Siyâbi 1965: 52 says. And it was their brother tribe, the B. 'Umar b. 'Âmir, closely associated with the Ḥuddân in their Jabal, who were the eponyms of the Wadi B. 'Umar, not the 'Âmir b. Ṣa'ṣa'a homonyms as Siyâbi also claims (p. 60).

(6) There is also mention of a Washâḥî shaikh, a Mâlik b. Fahm group possibly from Ḍank.

(7) The main numismatic material and discussion of the context is found in Vasmer 1927, who goes down to Bahâ' al-Dawla; Bates 1974 for Omani Wajîhid coins; and for the late Bûyid period Bivar and Stern 1958. Also Leuthold 1980: coin 36; Kmietowicz 1979; Lowick 1986; 'Aṭîf 2000.

(8) *Ibar*, iv. 93.

(9) *KD* 465.

(10) *Murûj*, i. 233-4.

(11) *Ṭabari Continuatus*, 68.

(12) Cf. *EI2*, Qarmaṭi (Madelung), which is the source of much of the general history that follows.

(13) *'Ibar*, iv. 89, 92-3.

(14) *EI2*, al-Djannâbi.

(15) *Tanbîh*, 500.

(16) Cf. *EI2*, Qarmaṭi.

(17) Abû 'l-Mu'thir's letter to his opponent Ibn Ja'far of Izki (Kâshif edn., i. 262-3) indicates that 'Azzân b. al-Hizbar's attempt to rally the *shurât* was more to do with getting money than exacting just revenge.

(18) See notably Abû Qaḥṭân's *Sîra* and *Tuḥfa*, i. 269 ff.

(19) Abûl-Ḥawâri, letter to the Hadramis (Kâshif edn., i. 360-1.

(20) I am inclined to the former, but Al-Salmi 2009a puts forward the argument that Aḥmad b. Hilâl was of the Bahlâ 'Atîk and the Wajîhids from the Ḥuddân.

(21) *Akḥbâr...*, trans. Canard, ii. 79.

(22) Not 323 as per Kashf-Ross. *KD* 478 has the correct date, as too *Tuḥfa*. It is worth noting that Ibn Ḥawqal, who was travelling in this period, talks of an Imam at Nizwâ.

(23) *Tuḥfa*, i. 289-90.

(24) *Tuḥfa*, i. 178. Al-Sâlimi says he can find no details about this battle.

(25) 1877 edn., 30.

(26) *QS* viii. 307.

(27) *Ibid.* 306.

(28) Anon. A. I suspect they were a Nabḥâni dynasty (see Ch. 13).

(29) Anon. A.

(30) *Lum'a*, 80.

(31) Cf. *inter alia* Anon. A, *QS* viii. 306, and the introduction by 'Îsâ al-Bârûni to vol. ii of his *Jâmi'*.



(32) Ibn Ruzayq, *SQ* 254v, though no authority is given. That there were non-Kharûṣi Yaḥmad in the region is indicated by mention the death of a Yaḥmadi from Tan 'am in the Battle of al-Qâ'.

(33) Cf. also his *exposé* on the *Imâma* where he quotes Abû 'Abdullâh as saying it is only permitted for *ḥadath* that are *kufr*; otherwise it is *fitna* and on the path to hell, etc. (*Kâshif* edn., ii. 186).

(34) *Eclipse*, ii. 213, 216–18: cf. also Ibn al-Athîr, viii. 419–20.

(35) Miskawayh, ii. 213; Ibn al-Athîr, viii. 417. For discussion of the report of Nâfi' revolting against his master in 332 see Vasmer 1927.

(36) *Ibar*, iv. 450.

(37) Ibn al-Athîr viii, 474–5 (cf. also *apud Tuḥfa* i, 285–6, 318–19); *Ibar* iv, 450.

(38) For details see C&Z appendix on Ibâḍi Sources under al-Bisyâni and al-Kudamî; see also al-Baṭṭâshi.

(39) MNHC Ms of Muḥ.1078/1667. Unfortunately I only made sketchy notes, not having taken in the significance of these passages: but they suffice to show that al-Bisyâni was involved with Ḥafṣ's election.

(40) In the *Muṣannaf* x, ch. 33 he seems to imply that he was actually present but did not like the way things were done. The oath given was *amr bi'l-ma'rûf* etc. but also *w720'l-jihâd fi sabîl Allah*. Which implies he was *difâ'i* Imam but essentially elected to fight.

(41) *Tuḥfa* i, 277.

(42) *Tuḥfa* i, 285–6.

(43) This appears in *QS* viii under miscellaneous information at the end of the biographical section.

(44) For some background see Piacentini 2005.

(45) Between 390 and 394 according to Ibn al-Athîr, quoted Bihar and Stern. However, the Bahâ' al-Dawla Omani dinar of 395 (Bates 1974: no. 4) seems to have no local ruler inscribed. For a study of the Mukramids see Al-Salmi/al-Salimi 2005.

(46) Ibn Jawzi, vii. 252.

(47) Such influence also accords with his thesis that Râshid may indeed have adopted the title of Râshid Billâh, although his coins show no evidence of this. It is worth noting also that the Imams' inscriptions do not include the famous *lâ ḥukm* slogan.

(48) *Itḥâf*, pt. 1, 551 ff.

(49) Dr Al-Salmi kindly sent me a copy of the incomplete text mentioned in his Thesis, p. 80 *et passim*. Abû Zakariyyâ specifically addresses two people, the brothers, Abû 'Abdullah Muḥammad and Abû Bakr Ahmad, sons of Nu mân b. Muhammad, who we may presume were the two leading 'ulamâ' at that time.

(50) Kuwait n.d. edn., 115. Amongst the various appendices dated 1324/1906 is a very useful biography by Sulaymân al-Bârûni, largely drawn from the *Dîwân* itself, but probably also Maghribi sources, for certain elements seem to have no echo in Oman.

(51) See Bârûni's biography, pp. 3-6.

(52) Stern 1951: 193-255, n. 201.

(53) In 444 according to Ibn Maddâd and Anon. A. That date makes no sense for either my or Baṭṭâshi's thesis, for it would mean that Khalîl had set up in opposition to Râshid. It is almost certainly a *lapsus calami*.

(54) See Anon. A, *Tuḥfa*, i. 302, QS viii. 309.

(55) Ibn al-Athîr, ix. 387, 'Ibar, iv. 489-90; cf. also Bivar and Stern 1958, *Tuḥfa*, i. 319.

(56) Cf. the full text in *Muṣannaf*, x. MNHC edn. 212-13 (abbrev. in *Tuḥfa*, i. 309-10).

(57) Was he fighting the Qarâmita? Ibn Khaldûn ('Ibar, iv. 93) says they periodically had walis in Oman until 375, the last being a hermit whom the 'Khawârij' of Nizwâ drove out along with the Rawâfiḍ (extremist Shi'a). If so, it was in northern Oman, but the 375 date makes little sense. Qarmaṭi rule in Hasa was brought to an end by 'Abdullâh b 'Ali al-'Ayûni, aided by the Saljuqs in 462 after seven years of fighting, in which some Omani tribesmen had quite willingly responded to Abû 'Abdullâh b. Sanbar's appeal in 459/1066-7 (de Goeje 1895: 5-30). See Ch. 13 for the 'Uyûnids

(58) Text and translation in Al-Salmi, Thesis, ch. 5; he also provides evidence that Ibâḍism was, or had been widespread along the Makran coast and Sind.

(59) I am sure that the date of his death as 530/1136 (*KD* 531) or Shawwal 533/1139 (Anon. A) is a mistake for his grandson, 'Abdullâh b. Aḥmad, the *qâḍi al-quḍât* at Damâ (cf. Ch. 13). I find this date impossibly late if indeed al-Khaḍar was active in Râshid b. Sa'îd's time (cf. *Tuḥfa*, i. 312).

(60) *Muṣannaf*, x. §17.

(61) This appears in the unpublished sections of the MNHC manuscript *Jawhar al-Muqtaṣir*, and while unattributed can only be by Abû Ishâq; see my note in Wilkinson 1987: 167.

(62) *Dîwân*, 100.

(63) Note that al-'Umâra makes no mention of this Ibâḍi attack.

(64) Thesis, no. cix. The authorship is not mentioned by al-Sâlimi, but Al-Salmi's attribution certainly makes sense.

(65) Note, however, the potential mimesis of Râshid b. Walîd, the Nizwân Imam of a century-and-a-half earlier.

(66) Cf. under *EI2* (Bosworth); Aubin 1959; Houtsma 1885: notably pp. 368–70 for the conquest of Oman. His source states that the Bûyid Statthalter was one Shâriyyâr b. T(?)âfil.

(67) A four-volume version was published by MNHC in 1984. The sources quoted would seem to confirm he was from the first rather than the second half of the 5/11<sup>th</sup> cent.

(68) The *Bayân al-Shar'*, lxviii quotes part of Khalîl's address to his soldiers when they were leaving for *jihâd*; in this the Imam advises that he had confirmed [Abu Zakariyyâ'] Yaḥyâ b. Sa'îd (who was presumably to accompany them). There is also in the *K. al-Jawhari* by the author of the *Muṣannaf* a reply by Abu Zakariyyâ' to Khalîl, while Al-Salmi (Thesis, nos. xci and xcii) has a letter of his responding to a complaint by a group of '*ulamâ'*' accusing some of the Imam Khalîl's walis of corruption.

(69) Rössler 1898 recounts that even in his time the people of Nakhal rallied under the war-cry of Shâdhân against the Ma'âwil who still used the original cry of Awlad Shams! Cf. also Wilkinson 1977: 174.

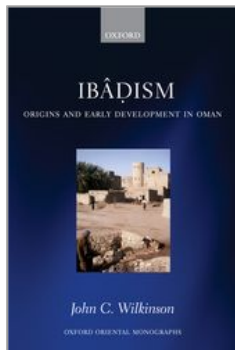
(70) The witness list includes a Minqali, i.e. from the area behind Qalhât where the B. Salîma predominated.

(71) Al-Sâlimi's doubts concerning this *nisba* are vitiated by the fact that the qadi Abû Bakr died in Ram. 502 and not 552 (cf. Anon. A); that in any case makes far better sense of Abû Bakr's *floruit*.

(72) The essential documents described make up the unpublished part one of the *Jawhar al-Muqtaṣir*; MNHC Ms 372, dated 1206, has the same documents with a brief biography of the *Muṣannaf's* author. 'Awtabi's *sîra* to the Kilwans also mentions this Nizwâ affair (cf. Wilkinson 1981). Al-Sâlimi is rather disappointing about his Imamate and only gives the briefest account of the Nizwâ affair.

(73) Cf. Anon A., Ibn Maddâd, *Sîra, Tuḥfa*, i. 338 ff. The dates here do accord well and may be considered reliable.

University Press Scholarship Online  
**Oxford Scholarship Online**



## Ibâdism: Origins and Early Development in Oman

John C. Wilkinson

Print publication date: 2010

Print ISBN-13: 9780199588268

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2011

DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.001.0001

### Consequences

John C. Wilkinson

DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.003.0012

#### **[ - ]** Abstract and Keywords

This chapter considers the changes resulting from these events as they affected Ibâdî theory concerning types of Imam, the principle of one Imam in a *misr*, permitted behaviour towards occupying powers, and what is permitted in warfare against the *jabâbira* and *ahl al-baghi* (tyrants and renegades). It continues with a survey of the evolution of Ibâdî *fiqh* during this period, the concern with recovering and recording past records (*taqyîd*) into *hifz* and *jawâmi'*, culminating in works like the *Musannaf* and *Bayân al-Shar'*, and with its abandonment of the old peculiarly Ibâdî form of *siyar* literature. In the process, Ibâdism opened itself to developments elsewhere in the Islamic world, notably Sunni norms: analysis of Omani, Maghribi, and Hadrami contemporary literature shows how *hadîth* were absorbed into the *âthâr* of the community but without the accompanying *isnâd* scholarship. The key figures of the period as well as their literature are surveyed. The chapter concludes with a preliminary discussion of the last main figure of the 5/11th century, al-'Awtabi.

*Keywords:* jabâbira, ahl al-baghi, Imâm, Sunni norms, Siyar literature, fiqh, Hadîth, Al-'Awtabi

The consequences of a long period of occupation by foreign regimes or their vassals, the limited and sometimes fragmented authority of Imams who periodically took office, their relationship with the occupying powers, ranging from a submissive cohabitation to outright war, all raised issues that had only been vaguely considered when the Imam had controlled a united country and an expanding and increasingly prosperous maritime trade.

**Shâri, difâ 'i and ḍa 'if Imams**

One issue already discussed is that of two Imams in a *miṣr*, which now became applied not just to Oman and the rest of the Muslim world but to its subdivision, so that one could have (at least provisionally) an Imam in the north (Ḥafīt) and another in Nizwâ.

Another issue that needed much clearer definition was the distinction between *shâri* and *difâ 'i* Imams. I have already discussed this in my *Imamate Tradition of Oman*<sup>1</sup> and will only briefly summarize here, adding a few supplementary remarks. In the earliest days the essential role of the Imams was to practice *shirâ'* and establish an Ibâḍi state with the *shurât*. And yet such Imams as Abû Ḥâtim al-Malzûzi or Abû'l-Khaṭṭâb al-Ma'fari in North Africa, or Ibn Abi 'Affân in Oman, were subsequently designated *difâ 'i*. It was only with the crisis surrounding 'Abd al-Raḥmân's succession in Tahert that the nature of his authority was laid down, following appeal to al-Rabî' and the Basrans, and his ruling automatically devolved on al-Wârith when he replaced Ibn Abi 'Affân. As shown in Chapter 7, the Nukkârites, or Maḥbûbiyîn as they called themselves, were concerned to limit the powers of the Imam by ensuring he ruled with a consultative body, and in the light of the dynastic power that the Rustamids acquired, and which in some ways much later characterized the Ya'âruba Imamate in Oman, this precautionary approach might seem justified in hindsight, but at the time it was deemed impractical. So al-Rabî' stipulated the three essential precepts of the Imamate as: *lâ (p.362) sharṭ alâ l-imâm*, that is, no terms other than those arising from the *lâ ḥukm illâ lillâh* condition may be imposed; that while he should consult, no statutory advisory body should be prescribed (from which it followed that he was secure in his tenure provided he applied God's *ḥukm*); that even if a better man emerges it was no reason to change an Imam. The essential difference from the early Imams (and that included al-Julandâ b. Mas'ûd, although not Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq) was that 'Abd al-Raḥmân and his successors, and al-Wârith and his, had full powers, whereas previously Imams had been appointed because they were politically or militarily the most suitable candidates to further the establishment of the state. Often they had been nothing much more than tribal leaders, and it was subsumed by the '*ulamâ'*, albeit not always clear to the Imam himself, that his authority was provisional.

Once the true state had been properly established, the Imam had both the authority and the duty to expand as well as defend it, but he should act according to the conditions prevailing as he and those he consulted judged fit. *Jihâd* was discretionary, not prescribed, and ordering it was part of the plenipotentiary powers of the Imam, although it could not be forced on the *qa'ada*, only on the *shurât*. True, in Hadramawt the issue did come to the fore right from the start, when Ḥâjib al-Ṭâiy firmly adjudicated in favour of a quietist approach, since the community was insufficiently strong to pursue *shirâ'*, and such caution generally seems to have obtained, even after the Imamate was established in Oman. But as Abû 'Abdullâh stated, the Hadrami Imams were simply adopting the lower profile of the *qa'ada* and not the *daraja al-ulyâ* which the Omanis had contracted for ('*aqd al-shirâ'*). This phrase shows that the concept of *shirâ'* was integral with the obligations of the Omani Imams, but that of itself did not make them *shâri* Imams. Such a designation was a rationalization of their status following the collapse of the Imamate, when it became necessary to stipulate to a locally elected Imam whether he was to carry out warfare beyond the necessity of ensuring justice for his community (as, for example, in the relationship between the *difâ 'i* Ruḥayli Imam Abû Qâsim and Yûsuf b. Wajîh). The latter

---

obligation was covered by the term in the oath of *nahy an 'al-munkar* ('Forbidding Wrong'), whereas the *shâri* Imam's oath started with '*alâ tâ'at Allâh wa tâ'at rasûlihi*, that is, the full powers that had been given to the mainline Imams; this obligation could further be spelt out by adding a *jihâd fî sabîl Allâh* clause.

This rationalization was largely the work of al-Bisyâni. In his *Su'âl* he states that the oath given to Abû Bakr was '*alâ tâ'at Allâh, wa tâ'at rasûlihi wa'l-amr bi'l-ma'rûf wa nahy 'an al-munkar wa 'alâ jihâd fî sabîl Allâh*, a phrase which, as can be seen, divides into three parts. Interestingly enough, although not drawing particular attention to the fact, he states **(p.363)** that the oath to al-Julandâ was the Forbidding Wrong clause, that is, the oath given to the *difâ'i* Imam. Non-*shâri* Imams, he states, fall into four categories: the man with most of the qualities of the *shâri* Imam but who can be replaced if someone better or equal comes along (though there is dispute in the case of equals); the Imam who is like the *shâri* but tends to be weak in his judgements; one appointed for a specific period and who is rather like a *wakîl* for the Muslims; one appointed for a specific purpose such as a war or *ribât* (defence of the cause?), although he may be subsequently confirmed. The essential quality al-Bisyâni absolutely insists on for the *shâri* Imam is self-control, *tawallâ basîr nafsîhi*.

But such distinctions were largely peculiar to the period leading up to the restoration of the Second Imamate, which reached a climax when Râshid b. Sa'îd was specifically elected with *shâri* powers, but rapidly disintegrated thereafter. What then became important was the distinction between Imams elected with independent authority, whether of *difâ'a* or *shirâ'*, and those unqualified in '*ilm*, chosen for political reasons and termed a *ḍa'îf* Imam. The basic ruling had already been laid down by al-Bisyâni : that appointing such a weak Imam only arose out of necessity (*ḍarûra*), defined as a situation when the state (*dawla*) itself is imperilled; in that case a powerful non-qualified man may be appointed, so long as he is well intentioned, and may be given the *difâ'i* oath on condition he consults before making a decision (i.e. a breach of al-Rabî's second principle). Such consultation applied to the use of the *bayt al-mâl*, appointing walis, raising an army, and passing judgements. But this statutory advice was only for an initial period: if after a year, says Ibn Baraka, he has behaved wisely he may be confirmed and the conditions limiting his authority lapse. Earlier still, al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥawâri, drawing on the examples of 'Umar II and al-Julandâ, held that he may be confirmed any time between two months, and one year and two months, according to various notions.<sup>2</sup> Presumably the converse of the argument is that if he fails to meet the standards required he may be replaced by someone better, as per the provisional status of a *difâ'i* Imam. Which is why Ibn Abi 'Affân is classed as *difâ'i*, when in fact he was a *ḍa'îf* Imam selected for political reasons, in the same way as al-Julandâ had been; except that the Yaḥmadi proved unworthy of his charge whereas al-Julandâ died a martyr. The obvious example in modern times was the case of the Âl Bû Sâ'îdi 'Azzân b. Qays (Imam 1868-71), who, like al-Julandâ, had been chosen because he came from a rival branch of the ruling family.

However, the deposing or resignation of an Imam, even a *difâ'i* one, is complex, as shown by the case of Ibn Abi 'Affân and the argument that **(p.364)** had he possessed *aṣl al-imâma* he would never have been replaced by al-Wârith without showing the reasons why. So the general view

---

concerning the *difâ'i* Imam's resignation or removal is that there has to be good reason ( *'udhr*), preceded by a proper exchange of views. Such an exchange, in the views of the Rustâq party, was an essential for removing a *shâri* Imam, and they quote Bashîr b. Abi 'Abdullâh that an Imam cannot be put forward over another who has been properly elected, except under the following conditions: he condones the lapse of any of the absolute obligations of the Imamate ( *furûd al-imâma*); he orders a *ḥadd* punishment which is not permitted; he commits a sin (*dhanb*) which requires a *tawba* and fails to make such proper repentance. So the basic theory became that his followers should not immediately dissociate from an Imam committing a major sin (*makfira*) without first calling on him to make a formal *tawba*, and this is what the Rustâq party reproach Mûsâ and Râshid for failing to do. There was no accusation of al-Ṣalt committing an act incurring a *ḥadd* punishment, while old age in itself did not constitute a mental or physical incapacity calling for removal. Which is also why it was ridiculous for Mûsâ to say he was acting on the model of Abû Bilâl against 'Ubaydallâh, as Abû'l-Mu'thir held he was claiming.

But as the case of Muhannâ shows, the problem of how to confront a powerful Imam who is deemed to be acting tyrannically is not obvious and resulted in some '*ulamâ*' secretly dissociating from him. But that had no validity, for while *taqiyya* is permitted when the Imamate is in *kitmân*, that was obviously not the case in Muhannâ's time, for just as the *shâri* Imam is not allowed to use *taqiyya* so, presumably, neither are those who swore him allegiance. If he has committed a serious crime of the kind that demands a *ḥadd* punishment or failed to make a *tawba* for serious sins of commission or omission, then it was their responsibility to dissociate and if necessary fight against him, not take refuge in secret dissociation. Nevertheless, al-Bisyâni recognizes that the fact Abû 'Abdullâh, Bashîr b. al-Mundhir, and perhaps others, did secretly dissociate from Muhannâ implies he must have committed a *makfira*: but since Abû 'Abdullâh did not authorize a *khurûj* against him then it was not permitted against al-Ṣalt either; there was no essential difference between the two situations.

But one thing all the '*ulamâ*' agree on is that whatever the type of Imam, he is never a figurehead. And that is what he began to become in the aftermath of the civil war and again as the Second Imamate began to collapse.

#### The Hadrami classification

It is interesting to compare this Omani theory of the Imamate with a rather different version that evolved in the Hadramawt. Abû Ishâq (p.365) Ibrâhîm, in his *Dalâ'il*, has four types of oaths (*ṣifa al-bay' fî sabîl Allâh*): *shirâ*, *zuhûr*, *difa'*, and *kitmân*. The first is exemplified by Abû Bilâl and Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq. The second (*zuhûr*) oath is for the Imam to Forbid Wrong in his own country and to expand it as and when possible; as in Oman, the Maghrib ('Abd al-Raḥmân b. Rustam is specified) and the Hadramawt. The third requires defending the people of their country against their enemies and themselves from all that is reprehensible to the maximum degree possible; as in the case of the people of Nahrawân, Nukhayla, and, in the Hadramawt, the oath to 'Isâ b. Ḥujra. These three classifications are interesting for several reasons. In the first place he does not consider the Omanis any different from the Hadramis. *Shirâ'* only applied to two examples, both of whom were the exemplars for all of *shirâ'*, the duty to try and (re-)establish the true Muslim community somewhere. Once established, however, the Imam was responsible for ensuring proper rule in his own country (*zuhûr*), and was only to expand it when

---

conditions allowed. In other words, Abû Ishâq was rejecting the Omani reproach that the Hadramis were not on the *daraja al-ulyâ*, since the primary responsibility of the Imam was to his own country. And it is interesting that, while he places the Omanis and the Hadramis on the same footing, he considered only one Imam in the Maghrib as of an equal status, the first Rustamid. On the other hand, he does have a *difâ'î* Imam, and the prototype is represented by the first two Muḥakkima *khurûj*, and by one Hadrami, a figure otherwise unknown to us; but no Omani. Nor does he have any discussion of the *ḍa'îf* Imam. That may be because in the Hadramawt there was no particularly powerful group whose political support was essential for re-establishing the Imamate. On the other hand, he does have the classification of *kitmân*: the man whom they swear allegiance to in secret to Forbid Wrong and to whom they pay the *zakât*; but significantly he gives no examples, unlike the Maghribis, who cite Jâbir b. Zayd and Abû 'Ubayda (see Chapter 14). Such a state of *kitmân* with a secret Imam never has featured in Oman, and the nearest to what he is describing is the *muḥtasib* of which Shabîb b. 'Aṭiyya was the model. But there is no record of there being a secret oath to him.

So it seems that Abû Ishâq is really downgrading the classifications of the Imamate to meet circumstances in Hadramawt, with the essential requirement being promoting proper rule in his own country. Abû Ishâq also has an interesting version of how an Imam is selected. Six, or so me say five, of the most worthy and pious give him allegiance, after which the people do so. And the oath must be said with a hand-clasp. And if they want him *shâri* after a period in which *shirâ'* has lapsed, then as Abû'l-Ḥasan (al-Bisyâni) states, they give him the full oath ('*alâ ṭâ'at Allâh*, etc.). So he establishes justice for the strong and the weak, the lowly and the high, the near and the far, the hated and the loved, and the (p.366) prescriptions of Islam. However, that does not seem to place him in the same category as Abû Bilâl and Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq. It is clear from the context that *shirâ'* means a switch from a defensive situation to one in which the Imam is to make war and restore the Imamate throughout the traditional domain, as did Râshid b. Sa'id, and as Abû Ishâq was himself to do.

#### Relations with *jabâbira* and *ahl al-baghy*

An issue of crucial importance that also developed in the period following the collapse of the First Imamate was the relationship with the occupying authorities and their allies. The reference work, as the *Sîrat al-Barara* makes clear, was the *K. al-Muḥâraba* by Abû 'Abdullâh's son, Bashîr, who after the civil war held the particularly important post of Qadi in Sohar, now under direct foreign occupation. Hence his concerns with defending the Ibâḍi community, not just physically, but also its values and morality. I have recently seen this work, which Dr Al-Salmi is editing. He assures me it is complete, although there are quotations from it that I have not traced, but that may be because all works dealing with the subject add material to this basic work, as in the pseudo-*K. al-Muḥâraba*.<sup>3</sup> Be that as it may, the core of the work is essentially concerned with the obligations of defensive warfare, the requirements of Forbidding Wrong, and how to conduct war against the *ahl al-baghy*.

The section on the first is an interesting indication of Ibâḍi methodology and furthers our earlier discussion of Mu'tazili influence in his *Raṣf*. After studying what the Qur'ân says, Bashîr follows with the Prophet's Sunna. The latter includes generally accepted *riwâyat*, and he quotes a specific *ḥadîth* known in the standard collections, but without giving any source or *isnâd*:

---



likewise a relevant *ḥadīth* quoted by Abû Bakr in a sermon. This appreciation is then followed by *ijmâ' al-umma* and the *'uqûl* which God has provided (*ja'ala*) as proof and which is the guidance for the *sîrat al-mustaqîm*. The hermeneutic link between insights and proof therefore seems to be *'aql*, and this is explicit when dealing with *amr bi'l-ma'rûf*; there is no mention of *qiyâs* or *'illa*. Nor is there any direct evidence given of what the Ibâḍi *aṣḥâb* have said; merely that it is what the *â'immat al-'adl* and *ahl al-iqrâr* practise. A similar approach characterizes the chapter dealing with war against the *ahl al-baghy*, which is essentially a lengthy treatise on Sûra al-Hijrât 9: only right at the end, after thirteen sections on this subject, do we get the first reference to some specific Ibâḍi cases from Basra and Oman and a reply of his father, Abû 'Abdullâh. (p.367) Otherwise it is a detailed general description of what is permitted and not permitted in fighting, the taking and treatment of prisoners-of-war, the wounded, and so on. While the enemy were entitled to be treated as *ahl al-qibla*, the fact remains that *la guerre c'est la guerre*, and while care should be taken to avoid attacking 'civilians', people got killed and the tactics employed had to be appropriate to the situation. But there is little specific to the actual conditions of Oman like cutting *aflâj*, and so on, which the *Sîrat al-Barara* claims he dealt with.

While the term *ahl al-baghy* of course refers to the Qur'ânic *sûra* concerning two Muslim factions fighting each other, I have made the point at some length in my earlier books<sup>4</sup> that there is an implicit distinction between Omanis and non-Omanis when the term is used. *Ahl al-baghy* tends to refer to those who have abandoned the true *da'wa*, who have rebelled against the just Imam, or been led astray by ideologies emanating from neighbouring regions (notably Qarmatîsm from Bahrayn in our period); as such, the term tends to refer to lapsed Omanis, Hadramis, and undisciplined troublemakers, often in the bedu fringes. *Jabâbira* is a term used very early on by the Ibâḍis (Ḥâjib and Shabîb both employ it) and reputedly derives from the plural of *jabbâr*, a palm which has grown tall and cannot bear fruit; so it is used of something that has become unproductive through hypertrophy, the proud ruler who *takabbar 'alâ'l-nâs*.<sup>5</sup> But this is probably a rather fanciful etymology, and more likely the word is just another form of *jubbâr*. *Jabâbira* covers a wide range of 'unconstitutional' rulers, those guilty of *aḥdâth*. It sometimes has the connotation of local bad men, leaders of the *ahl al-baghy* or local dynasts, *mulûk*, 'princely' families, the Julandâ, increasingly the Yaḥmad of Rustâq as the Second Imamate collapsed, and the Nabâhina, who produced the longest period of non-Imamate rule in the country's history. But more often than not it refers to foreign rulers or their vassals, the *salâṭîn al-jawr* who oppress the country.

Certain basic rules concerning relationships with such people go back to the very origins of Ibâḍism, notably the use of *taqiyya*, and always subject to some dispute. As we have seen, praying behind *jabâbira* was allowed, and according to al-Bisyâni (or possibly a *Ziyâda* to his *Jâmi'*), the precedents indicate there was no harm in taking their concubines in marriage, accepting their gifts, eating their food, wearing their clothes, riding their animals, so long as these had not been illegally obtained; but others maintained that buying from the *jubbâr* was not proper. Wâ'il b. Ayyûb made clear that no one should collect the *kharâj* for a Sultan, a matter that Abû 'Abdullâh strongly underscores in his letter to (some of) the Maghribis. The early rules concerning how far an Imam could submit (p.368) to an invader largely derived from the notion that while verbal submission was permitted, the *bayt al-mâl* could not be surrendered, as per the

---

precedents set in al-Julandâ's time, plus some others established in the Hadramawt and North Africa. But the specifics largely emerged in the immediate aftermath of the civil war, notably from Abû'l-Mu'thir, Ibn Ja'far, and Abû'l-Ḥawâri (whom Muḥammad b. Rûḥ also consulted) in the interior, and the Ruḥayl brothers, Bashîr and 'Abdullâh, in Sohar. One set of rulings dealt with those living in territory under non-Ibâḍi control. Basically nothing should be done to help the enemy and their oppression: cooperation should be the minimum necessary to subsist, as with cultivation, even though the resulting taxes might help build up the power of the tyrant; that, however, did not extend to working illegally seized land (*maghṣûba*). In times of peace, food and goods could be sold to the *jabâbira*, but not arms, horses, and the like; in time of war even that would be deemed positive cooperation. A considerable debate emerged over whether a case might be referred to a non-Ibâḍi qadi appointed by the Sultan,<sup>6</sup> or bearing witness before him, but 'Abdullâh b. Muḥammad b. Maḥbûb set a precedent by doing so in the case of the people of Lawâ (in the Shimâliyya coastal strip), who had been dispossessed of their property, arguing that it was permissible if that were the only way of obtaining justice.

None of these rulings really affected external trade, since by its nature it was integrated into the territory of the *jabâbira*. Nevertheless, the rulings established during the First Imamate were expanded by al-Bisyâni (see his *Jâmi* while Ibn Ja'far (once Wali of Sohar) has some interesting rulings dealing with the copper mines of the Wadi Jizzi, which were increasingly being taken over by capitalists in Sohar, then reaching its apogee. The only difference was that now the taxes were no longer *zakât* going to the Imam, but *mukûs* to the tyrants. But perhaps the quintessence of the Ibâḍi ethos was that one should not be dishonest in dealings with the *jabâbira*. Commerce had been vital for the economies of the Tahert, Omani, and Hadrami Imamates, as well as for the trade of Seistan, and became even more so for the survival of the isolated communities in North Africa after the collapse of the Rustamid Imamate. On the other hand, such honesty, al-Bisyâni (*Ziyada?* dealing with *iyman*) indicates, did not extend to honouring an oath given in fear to a corrupt ruler (*sultân al-jâ'i*).

### **(p.369) Property restored to the Imamate**

Another set of rulings dealt with what happened to property after Ibâḍi reconquest. This naturally came to the fore with the establishment of the Second Imamate, and here one of the leading authorities was the Qadi Nijâd b. Mûsâ of Manaḥ. Earlier, Ibn Baraka had laid down that *ex officio* property of the oppressive regime should be distributed amongst those who had suffered, if the original ownership could not be traced, but his pupil al-Bisyâni disallowed this. Nijâd, whom the author of the *Muṣannaf* consulted directly, started making a full *exposé* for him of the issues involved. The property of the Sultan, his officials, and so on became *amwâl mawqûfa ḥashariyya*, under the Imam's control, that is, effectively *ṣawâfi*, and could be used for the poor, as Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq did in Yemen, or *'izz al-dawla*, as 'Ali did with the fortunes Ṭalḥa and Ibn al-Zubayr had amassed (distributing it among 12,000 people at 500 dir-hams a piece). More contentious is what to do with the treasury (*buyût al-khazâyin*) that had been exacted through illegal taxes (notably *kharâj*). The main precedent was set by Abû Bilâl, who used it to pay the *muqâtila* stipends (*'aṭa*) and returned the rest, but Ḥâjib al-Ṭâ'iy and Abû Sufyân maintained that if it were in the form of grain it should be distributed to the poor. Nijâd's own solution was that it could be used for the furtherance of the state (*'izz al-dawla*), if it were in need. He then went on to deal with the two aspects which divided Ibn Baraka and his pupil over distributing it

---

among the oppressed, but he never got round to telling our author about the fourth issue. So he asked around, and the consensus was that if a Sultan had collected tax under the guise of *ṣadaqa* it should be returned to those who had paid it or who could substantiate a claim, proportionately if the sum were inadequate; otherwise it should be distributed amongst the poor.

#### Sterilized land

There was, though, a major problem, or rather two related aspects, that arose from these rulings, however meritorious they may seem: that concerning rights in abandoned land (*ramm*).<sup>7</sup> It largely arose in cases where the land had long since been abandoned and the ownership was untraceable (or only vaguely known as pertaining to a particular group), and in a parallel situation of inability to trace ownership where the land had been illegally seized. In the former case it was deemed either to belong to the absent (*ghawâyib*) and passed under the jurisdiction of the Imam, who (p.370) could use it for helping the poor (or *'izz al-dawla*, according to some), or else adjudged as belonging to the dead (*hashariyya*) and therefore untouchable, unless a proper claimant emerged. The jurisprudence concerning illegally seized land seems largely to have developed in the Bahlâ area (often used by the occupying power as their base in the interior), which the author of the *Bayân al-Shar'* had declared as *maghṣûba*. Such land, both Ibn Baraka and al-Bisyâni had earlier decreed, could not be sold.<sup>8</sup> So the principle that possession did not establish title was rigorously upheld and the land treated as *hashariyya*. Thus Salût, Sayfam, Jumâḥ (where Jabrîn was built in Ya'âruba times) were sterilized, and it was not until the fifteenth century that the principle was relaxed (by Ṣâliḥ b. Waḍḍâḥ al-Manaḥi) to the extent that the Imam might allow the land to be cultivated by the poor 'for the duration of their poverty', but no new *mulk* rights could be established, so rebuilding of the *falaj* system became effectively impossible. In this way huge areas of former cultivation in the interior and on the Batina went out of production during the centuries after the collapse of the First Imamate, and it was not really until Ya'âruba times that these sterilizing rules were relaxed by Ibn 'Ubaydân (Qadi of Bal'arab b. Sulṭân who built Jabrîn). He adjudged over the case of an abandoned *falaj* in Su'âl Nizwâ, that unless it could be proved that it came under Muslim organization or ownership, it was *mawât* and could be redeveloped. Since the only real proof would have been documentary, that laid the way open to the major restoration of agricultural land that occurred in the Ya'rubi period.

#### The Development of Ibâḍi Fiqh

In the course of the above discussion it is clear that there had been a major development of Ibâḍi *fiqh* and several figures became celebrated for their written treatises. For the most part, I have not studied such works from this point of view, since my interest has principally been in the light they throw on the economic, social, and political conditions in Oman. Consequently, I have generally been concerned with *aḥkâm* and rather less with the principles behind them. Nevertheless, there are certain general features that emerge quite clearly, and it is these I wish to emphasize here.

#### The early period: the oral tradition

In discussing the period up to the establishment of full Imamates in Oman and North Africa in Chapter 7, it was shown that the *da'wa* was (p.371) spread essentially through personal

---

contact, via the Hajj, missionary activities, the merchant and tribal networks, and through discussion in the *majlises* of the leading '*ulamâ*'. It was essentially an oral transmission, from Basra to the Ibâdi *amṣâr*, where new nodes of learning formed in which issues were discussed in mutual debate, as witness the Damâ confrontation over the Creation of the Qur'ân. These agreed views and the *dicta* of the leading figures formed the *âthâr*, the *ijmâ'* of the '*ilm*', that is, the (Ibâdi) tradition.

In some ways, therefore, the Ibâdis perpetuated the old tradition of not writing down '*ilm*', and it is relevant to note that both Jâbir b. Zayd and Ibn 'Abbâs are recorded as being opposed to having their views and legal opinions set down. Furthermore, Basra in general upheld that stance, well into the second half of the second century, whereas elsewhere the recording of tradition had become more or less generally accepted by the late Umayyad period. Cook<sup>9</sup> has discussed the conflicting evidence concerning this debate and shown that the opposition to the written record was as old as Islam itself (and before). On the other hand, he notes that in fact many scholars wrote down what they had learnt when they got back home, although they often erased their notes once they had memorized them and frequently destroyed their records on their deathbeds. That certainly makes sense of why the *ra'y* of Jâbir was recorded, as too the rulings of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭâb and al-Rabî': in Oman too, at least two important early figures, Mûsâ b. 'Ali and Abû 'Abdullâh, were thus preserved. I shall label such recordings as a *ḥifẓ*.

#### Ḥifẓ: Jawâmi'

Such recording became vital after the civil war, in which the invaders destroyed many 'books' (i.e. records), with the result that much reconstruction of the *âthâr* took place through consulting the old-timers, a process which of itself often led to quoting a short transmission line between the recorder and such worthies of the early First Imamate as Sa'îd b. Muhriz, Hâshim b. Ghaylân, and others. Such material became organized under subject, and incorporated with opinions from the leading figures of the immediate post-war generations, notably al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥawâri, Abû'l-Ḥawâri, Ibn Ja'far, Abû Qaḥṭân, Abû Sa'îd al-Kudami, Ibn Baraka, and al-Bisyâni, in the form of a *Jâmi'*. Their collections too are largely of a *ḥifẓ* nature, for it is often not at all clear how far, if at all, it was the author who actually set down what he taught or judged, or whether it was collected by his pupils, perhaps with the aid of the author. Consequently, it is also often difficult to know whether it has been glossed (p.372) by a subsequent transcriber, *a fortiori* since virtually all our extant Omani manuscripts date to the Ya'rubi period or later, and none I have seen goes back earlier than the second half of the sixteenth century, with the exception of the remarkable *K. al-Taqyîd*. Again, the style varies, probably more with that of the recorder rather than of the author. Al-Faḍl's surviving material preserved in his *Jâmi'*, for example,<sup>10</sup> deals almost entirely with family law and pre-emption rights and is somewhat reminiscent of Jâbir b. Zayd's style. As with all the *Jawâmi'*, it is still essentially in the problem (*mas'ala*) and response (*jawâb*) form; in this case the issue is recorded succinctly and the answers are terse, often little more than yes-no answers. But he does quote from the *âthâr* (along the lines I found from so-and-so) and he quotes his contemporaries, Abû'l-Mu'thir, Abû Qaḥṭân, Ibn Ja'far, and so on, although even here care must be taken that this is not an addition made by the compiler. Al-Faḍl was, of course, a highly controversial figure, the leading *faqîh* on the 'rebel' side in the civil war, and it is probably for this reason that little survives from him. His political rival, Abû'l-Mu'thir, left no *Jâmi'* as such, although he was clearly an important

---

jurist: rather, he was addicted to the *sîra* style (see below), both for the polemics concerning al-Şalt's deposing and in matters of theology. Nevertheless, many of his judgements have been preserved by his successors, some of whom were probably his pupils. Abû Qaḥṭân, although best known for his *sîra* over the deposing of al-Şalt, did apparently have a *Jâmi'*,<sup>11</sup> and this is quite often cited (under the title of *K. Abi Qaḥṭân*) in Abû Zakariyyâ's *Ayḍâḥ*, but it seems to be no longer extant.

Abû'l-Ḥawâri's *Jâmi'* (in its printed version at least) is nothing more than a series of problems and answers,<sup>12</sup> in which even his *sîras* (including his long letter to the Hadramis) have been incorporated and recast in this form. Such arrangement by the recorder of judgements and *obiter dicta* by subject inevitably starts with that of *ṭalab al-'ilm* and equally inevitably invites the transcriber to display his own scholarship, often with disastrous results for trying to reconstruct the original form. Thus, in a manuscript I saw of Abû'l-Ḥawâri's *Jâmi'*, we find works like 'Awtabi's *Ḍiyâ'* being cited, and such anachronisms are even more blatant in the *Jâmi'* of Ibn Ja'far, whose opening chapters are most certainly not by him. In the Abû'l-Ḥawâri work the additions and glosses are reasonably clear, but unfortunately in that of Ibn Ja'far even the editor of the printed version I saw had to admit defeat. This is most unfortunate, since it is a fundamental early work, frequently cited, with a *sharḥ* by Ibn Baraka, and a major commentary by Abû Sa'îd al-Kudami in his *Mu'tabar* of ninety-nine (p.373) chapters, which tries to bring order to the rather chaotic structure of his predecessor's work. The former seems no longer to exist, which is a pity as it may well in turn have been a counter-critique of his rival Abû Sa'îd's commentary. I have only glanced at manuscripts of this, but at least Abû Sa'îd confirms that what Ibn Ja'far actually said about *ṭalab al-'ilm* was that no one can *fatâ* unless he knows what is in the Book of God, the Sunna of his Prophet and the *âthâr* of the just Imams (that is, leading '*ulamâ'*', rather than actual Imams); Abû Sa'îd comments that the object of the latter two criteria is purely to throw light on the Qur'ânic injunctions. According to the *Anonymous List of Books*, the subjects in Ibn Ja'far's work were grouped into three *jawâmi'*, *aḥkâm*, *adyân*, and *dimâ'*. The first presumably contains those matters essentially appertaining to the role of the Qadi, although it does include an important chapter on *walâya* and *barâ'a* which, as well as dealing with the issue of testimony in the case of Mûsâ b. Mûsâ, underscores the requirement to know what the just predecessors agreed on. The second presumably deals with correct religious practices. The third title I can confirm and have studied at some length in manuscript for its content.<sup>13</sup> It seems essentially to cover the rights and duties of members of the Muslim community and their subject peoples, including lengthy treatment of *zakât*, *jizya*, and *ghanîma*. The work is of great interest for quoting some very early sources like Ḍumâm, Abû Mawḍûd Ḥâjib (al-Ṭâ'iy), the *K. Abi Şufra* (see below), Mûsâ b. Abû Jâbir, Mûsa b. 'Ali, al-Azhar b. 'Ali, Hâshim b. Ghaylân (a source also for Bashîr b. al-Mundhir), Abû Sufyân and his son Abû 'Abdullâh, whom he quotes direct, and so on. He also cites his contemporary Abû'l-Mu'thir. Despite their rivalry over the issue of al-Şalt's deposing, the mutual respect of these two contemporaries is indicated by a *sîra* Abû'l-Mu'thir addressed to him saying that his reputation was growing and asking advice over certain matters, all the while indicating that he ought to make a *tawba* for his views concerning Mûsâ b. Mûsâ.

---

### Ibn Baraka

With Abû Sa'îd we are moving into a more structured approach, but the *aḥkâm* in his *Jâmi'* still follow the same sort of lines as his predecessors. Ibn Baraka's highly influential *Jâmi'*<sup>14</sup> was clearly edited by himself, and for each topic there is a general introduction followed by a series of problems and answers. Ibn Baraka was very conscious of the need to preserve the material transmitted from his teachers, Abû Marwân, Abû Mâlik, and the Imam Abû Qâsim Sa'îd, through whom he could reach **(p.374)** back to the early Imamate and the whole scholarship of the Âl Ruḥayl. His *K. al-Taqyîd* (see Note on Sources) also records early Basran material now lost, notably the *K. Abi Nuḥ*, *K. Abi Şufra* (also used by Ibn Ja'far), the *K. Abi al-Ḥurr*, and the *K. Abi Sufyân*. This indicates not only that the teachings of certain other very early figures had at least in part been recorded at some time in a *ḥifẓ* form, but that material was being rediscovered and recycled back from the Maghrib, and consequently also feeding into the development of *fiqh* in Oman (see Chapter 14). Similarly, his pupil al-Bisyâni also collected early works,<sup>15</sup> including, it seems, the *sîra* of Sâlim b. Dhakwân, as mentioned in Chapter 6.

But from the point of view of the development of the *madhhab*, what is interesting is that Ibn Baraka demonstrates he knows, and what is more, clearly expects other '*ulamâ'* to be aware of, the principles of *ḥadîth* criticism (*marâsîl*, *maqâṭi*, etc.).<sup>16</sup> Jâbir b. Zayd, it is to be noted, does not feature as a transmitter, and on one occasion Ibn Baraka quotes a *ḥadîth* in markedly different form from that attributed to him in the *Musnad*.<sup>17</sup> Nor is Ibn Baraka afraid to discuss controversial views, for example in his exposé on '*aql* in which he demonstrates a wide awareness of the literature, and cites the Sunni doctors (Mâlik, Abû Ḥanîfa, al-Shâfi'i), the Mu'tazila, Dâwûdiyya, and so on. In this, he is a precursor of an approach which reached its zenith in the time of al-Qalhâti, a century-and-a-half later, whose *al-Kashf wa'l-Bayân* exposes the true creed through rebuttal of other schools and the seventy-two false *firqas* (Chapter 14). This process of refuting attacks on Ibâḍi doctrine is also evident in the work of his pupil, al-Bisyâni.<sup>18</sup>

Ibn Baraka also shows convergence towards Sunni norms, with the result that he smooths over various earlier controversies that have largely been lost in the mists of time. Take, for example, the case of *nabîdh*. His approach is totally 'orthodox',<sup>19</sup> not surprising since it is more or less directly drawn from Sunni sources. Yet we know that one of the things the Hadramis reproached the Omanis about was that they forbade *nabîdh* when the Khurâsânîs permitted it. Furthermore, Abû 'Abdullâh himself recounts (from his father via Abû Şufra) that Jâbir b. Zayd drank *nabîdh* with his friend Abû Faqâs, who explained to him how he distilled it and protected it from the flies.<sup>20</sup> More important is the fact that Jâbir b. Zayd distinguished between the instrument causing intoxication and its effects.<sup>21</sup> **(p.375)** Furthermore, in the *Âthâr* of al-Rabî' *nabîdh al-jarâ* was disapproved of (*karah*) rather than forbidden (*ḥaram*). Clearly there was reason for dispute. So when Abû'l-Ḥawâri eventually responded he avoided the problem by simply talking about *khamr* and the *ḥadd* punishment of forty lashes the Prophet proscribed, and how 'Umar ordered eighty lashes. After which, he then recounts what Ibn 'Abbâs said to 'Ali on the subject, and so on, and that al-Rabî' confirmed the tradition (*sunna*). All of which leads the editor into a paroxysm of footnotes explaining both what the Qur'ân says and citing al-Bukhâri and Muslim. Which illustrates precisely the point I am making; such *ḥadith* references are the Ibâḍi norms of today, but they were not those of Abû'l-Ḥawâri's time. So his *exposé* merely shows that the

---

standard views about *khamr* and its *ḥadd* punishment were well known and approved by al-Rabī' (confirmed in the *Mudawwana al-Ṣughra*). But he entirely avoids the actual issue of *nabīdh*, which is what the Hadrami Imam Sulaymān b. 'Abd al-'Azīz had raised.

The debate, in fact, is clarified by another Hadrami, Abū Ishāq, in his *Dalā'il*. The *ḥadd* punishment was incurred for drinking *khamr*, however inebriated the sinner. With *nabīdh*, however, it was only administered if the person was drunk. That leads to discussion of what exactly was *nabīdh* and *khamr*, but more interestingly, how to define being drunk. Some said if the person had lost his wits (*ikhtilāṭ 'aqluhu*), which in fact corresponds with the notion of *khamr*, *khāmīr al-'aql*; others, when the miscreant cannot distinguish between the ground and the sky, or a dinar from a dirham, or his own robe from someone else's. Abū Ishāq then talks about what the Omanis say, that some permit it so long as it meets the definition of the product, as famously discussed by the Prophet with the 'Abd al-Qays delegation. But, he then states, it was Ibn Baraka who hardened the stance absolutely forbidding it, along with *khamr*. The grounds on which he does so are essentially Sunni *ḥadīth*, but it is worth noting that Ibn Khaldūn used the criterion of inebriation, but in his case to illustrate the use of *qiyās*, that both products had the same effect, to cause intoxication, and that therefore *nabīdh* was forbidden also.<sup>22</sup> Once again freedom of choice was being eliminated and the straitjacket of Sunni conformism imposed. It was not only in Rustāq dogma that Ibn Baraka and his pupil al-Bisyānī were rigidifying the Ibāḍī code, but also in *fiqh* and theology. So Cook points out that while Abū 'Abdullāh exempts women from physically trying to fulfil the obligation (*farḍ*) of Forbidding Wrong, Ibn Baraka maintained they should sally forth just like the men.

**(p.376)** The great change Ibn Baraka brought about is that he had opened the gates of *ijtihād* to Sunni scholarship; which in turn helps explain why his *Jāmi'* is quoted as the basis for the *Muṣannaf's* chapter entitled *al-akhbār* from the Prophet. Yet despite this shift towards Sunni norms and his use of *ḥadīth*, they are without *isnāds*. The effect of this new approach is doubly clear in Abū Ishāq's *Dalā'il*. Here, for every issue under discussion he gives a string of the relevant *ḥadīth*. But the majority are simply of the form *ruwā 'an al-nabīlrasūl Allāh*, though sometimes one finds a Companion (Ibn 'Abbās, Anas b. Mālik, 'Ā'isha, Ibn Mas'ūd, Abū Sa'īd al-Khudri, Abū Hurayra, Jābir b. 'Abdullāh, etc.) *'an al-nabī*, but no further transmission line. In fact Abū Ishāq explains his approach in his introduction, where he says he only reports what the Prophet said when it is undisputed, and in consultation with the Qadi Abū 'Abdullāh Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Qays b. Sulaymān, who I suspect was a relative and whose own grandfather seems to have been a major source of information concerning Hadrami practices. So what we see here is that those *ḥadīth* over which there is general consensus amongst the '*ulamā'* of Hadramawt and Oman (who remain the great authorities for the Hadramis) have now been incorporated as 'guides and proofs' to reinforce or even emend the Ibāḍī code. In theology too, Ibn Baraka was shifting towards Sunni-Ash'ari norms and further rejecting Mu'tazili influence. By accepting the distinction between *ṣifāt al-dhāt*, of His essence and eternal (*qadīm*), and *ṣifāt fi'liyya*, His acts which are not, he is able to cut through older controversies.

Such external influence is not surprising when it is remembered that since the civil war Oman had, and was still being exposed to, a huge range of doctrines. Already faced with such deviant religious philosophies as those of the Murji'ites and the Mu'tazila, or heresies like the

---

Shu'aybiyya and Hârûn, they were now confronted not only with various Shi'i heresies, but much more insidiously by the straightforward Sunnism imposed by those ruling in the Caliph's name. And it was now that the Shâfi'i school, as developed by Ibn Surayj (d. 306/918) and his pupils, was in its full flowering.<sup>23</sup> That this opening onto the outside world and borrowing from Sunnism in particular was not peculiar to the proto-Rustâq school is proved by the work of Ibn Baraka's arch-rival, Abû Sa'îd al-Kudami. This is apparent not only in his critique of Ibn Ja'far, but quite specifically in his *K. Ziyâdat al-Ashrâf*, which is reported as being a commentary on the *K. al-Ishrâf 'alâ madhâhib al-ishrâf* of the Shâfi'i Ibn Mundhir al-Naysâbûri (Abû Bakr Muḥammad b. Ibrâhîm, d. 318/930), a work of *'ilm al-khilâf*, in other words, of the disputations between different schools.<sup>24</sup>

**(p.377)** The Ibâḍi *'ulamâ'* could no longer ignore the scholarship that had developed elsewhere. Which is why the *Jawâmi'* often open their discussion of a subject with statements attributed to the Prophet. Al-Salmi confirms my own observation, that until the third century there are virtually no *ḥadîth*, a remark he repeats also in connection with Râshid b. Sa'îd's *Sîra* to Manṣûra. There was no tradition of *ḥadîth* scholarship: the Ibâḍi tradition was the Qur'ân and *âthâr*. Indeed they positively rejected it: *kull muḥdatha bid'a*, it was *ḥashw*, as Shabîb b. 'Aṭiyya had stated. Personally, I would translate the statement in the relatively early *sîra* to the Kh(w)ârzimis *fa lâ ta'khudhû bi qawl al-mutaḥaddithîn* as 'do not accept what those who recount *ḥadîth* say', rather than what the 'innovators' say, as Al-Salmi has it (though the end result might be deemed the same). But even though *ḥadîth* were creeping in, and Ibn Mas'ûd, Shabîb's *bête noire*, had gained respectability, there is no application of *ḥadîth* scholarship, and the standard Ibâḍi form remains *ruwâ 'an al-nabî* or variants thereof, with no trace of *isnâds*. Individual early important *'ulamâ'* might on occasion be cited, but more generally what predecessors had said was absorbed into the form *qâl aṣḥâbunâ* or *min al-âthâr*, and so on. Even as late as the great Ya'rubi Qadi Ibn 'Ubaydân, the form is *yarwi 'an al-nabî*.

#### The assimilation of *ḥadîth*

So we need to ask ourselves why the Ibâḍis had spurned *ḥadîth*. One element in a possible explanation is that they were continuing the old tradition of rejecting *ḥadîth* qua *ḥadîth*, as Shabîb demonstrates, in favour of Calder's 'community Sunna'. Another is perhaps given in the famous statement of Ibn Sîrîn (34–110), who explains that *isnâds* started as a result of challenges to name sources when the *fitna* occurred. If they were from the *ahl al-sunna* they were accepted, if they were from the *ahl al-bida'* they were not. Muslims have assumed that this *fitna* is that of 'Uthmân's time. Schacht went to the other extreme and said it was when Walîd b. Yazîd b. 'Abd al-Malik was murdered in 126/744, and considers the attribution to Ibn Sîrîn as spurious. Juynboll<sup>25</sup> has argued fairly cogently that the *fitna* referred to is that of Ibn Zubayr and shows how the term evolved. Even though *ahl al-sunna* should not be translated as Sunnis yet, the contrast with the *ahl al-bida'* is stark: Juynboll has argued that for Ibn Sîrîn it primarily meant the Qadarites, Khârijites, and Râfidites in that order, for reasons that need not be gone into. So it follows that even if *fitna* did mean the first 'civil war', it does not alter the fact that the Khawârij (of whatever sort) were not *ahl al-sunna*.

---



**(p.378)** Thus rejected by those who evolved the *ḥadīth* literature, it is scarcely surprising the Ibâḍis in Oman and Basra did not accept the *isnâd* norm their opponents used to justify their scholarship. The assimilation of *ḥadīth* into the *âthâr*, I believe, essentially occurred through a process of dialysis, filtering through study of non-Ibâḍi sources. *Ḥadīth*, as we shall see, had appeared somewhat earlier in the Maghrib, but even there the process was the same. It may be illustrated by the example of *Tafsîr* of Hûd b. Maḥkam who originated in the Aurès mountains and was Qadi of the Imam Aflâḥ at Tahert. It is effectively an abridgement of the *Tafsîr* of Yaḥyâ b. Sallâm al-Başri (124–200/742–815), who was born in Basra but died in Cairo and spent some time in Qayrawân. This he modified by giving it an Ibâḍi slant with his own comments and by omitting inappropriate passages. In this way certain explanations and traditions are cited, al-Kalbi, Mujâhid, al-Ḥasan al-Başri, Ibn ‘Abbâs, Ibn Mas‘ûd, Abû Hurayra, Jâbir b. Allâh (numerous quotes), Ibn ‘Umar, Anas b. Mâlik. But never with *isnâds*. Furthermore, a solid mass of material has been absorbed from al-Ḥasan al-Başri (even though he is held in *wuqûf*), either directly from Yaḥyâ b. Sallâm or through a recension of his work made by ‘Amr b. ‘Ubayd al-Başri. So long as one does not count Ibn ‘Abbâs, Hûd only quotes two Ibâḍi sources, Jâbir b. Zayd and Abû ‘Ubayda, as far as I can make out, and no al-Rabî’. Furthermore, Gilliot, although using al-Rabî’s *Musnad* to study the work, in fact only quotes him once, for confirming an almost identical form of interpretation deriving from Ibn ‘Umar. In other words, al-Rabî’ had not yet acquired the status in the Maghrib that the attributed *ḥadīth* collection later gave him.

This then, I believe, was the essential process whereby *ḥadīth* found general acceptance in the Ibâḍi literature. They were absorbed into the *âthâr* over the generations. But it was the *âthâr* that counted.

#### The *Bayân al-Shar’* and the *Muṣannaf*

Thus works tended increasingly to be compilations as more and more judgements became recorded. So while Abû Zakariyyâ’s compendium starts with an appreciation of the role of the Qadi and how the post emerged (‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭâb, etc.), once he gets down to the nitty-gritty over an important issue like *shahâda* he cites everything he can find, from Abû ‘Abdullâh, ‘Azzân b. al-Ṣaqr, Mûsâ b. ‘Ali, Abû‘l-Ḥawâri (and what he reported from Nabḥân b. ‘Uthmân), al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥawâri, Ibn Baraka, Ibn Ja‘far, and others.<sup>26</sup> The final manifestations of this encyclopedic process were the seventy-two-volume *Bayân al-Shar’* by Abû Bakr Muḥammad b. Ibrâhîm, the forty-one-volume *Muṣannaf* of **(p.379)** Aḥmad b. ‘Abdullâh, and the fifty-one-volume *K. al-Kifâya* (now lost) of Muḥammad b. Mûsâ, the works of a remarkable line of authors from Samad Nizwâ, all of the same Kinda clan, the grandsons and great-grandson of Sulaymân b. Muḥammad b. ‘Abdullâh b. Miqdâd, in one version. All were trained in the Nizwâ tradition, Aḥmad by Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ṣâliḥ, a pupil of the *Bayân al-Shar’*’s author, himself taught by the leading authority of his time, the Qadi Abû‘l-‘Ali Ḥasan b. Aḥmad of ‘Aqr Nizwâ.<sup>27</sup> All were great scholars with several other books: the author of the *Bayân*, for example, composed works on the ascetic life (*al-zuhd wa‘l-taṣṣawuf*), medicine, language, and wrote poetry, including a legal treatise in *urjûza* verse.<sup>28</sup> His death-date is reliably given as 508/1115, for there is internal confirmation of his *floruit* in his work.<sup>29</sup> The author of the *Muṣannaf* died in 557/1162 and his teacher reputedly in 546/1151.

Monumental works of scholarship though they are, the *Bayân al-Shar'* and the *Muṣannaf* are really no more than compilations; they do not reflect any significant changes in the basic guidelines of *fiqh* development. The fundamentals remain the Qur'ân, the Sunna (defined as from the Prophet) and the *âthâr* (which are from the *sâbiqîn*, that is, those *fuqahâ'* who have preceded). It is from these that the Qadi seeks his responses (*ijtahada juhduhu*) as the *Muṣannaf* puts it in its chapter on *ijmâ'*. I have not studied how the two works really differ. The layout order is different, and I have an impression that the *Muṣannaf's* author sought out the opinions of his contemporaries rather more than did his predecessor, but I have only tried a superficial comparison in the treatment of the *imâma*. Here the author of the *Bayân* is far more interesting, since he quotes a great deal of historic precedent and is not afraid to deal with controversial issues. The *Muṣannaf's*, on the other hand, seems more concerned with principles and avoids controversy. He indicates that there had been disputes over the likes of the Imams Ghassân and Muhannâ, but even when dealing with the thorny issue of deposing an Imam and *walâya* and *barâ'a*, avoids discussion over what happened to al-Ṣalt.

Nevertheless, he was of the Rustâq party. In his *al-Ihtidâ'* he analyses the differences between the two parties, starting with an overview of what constitutes *aḥdâth*, their description (*ṣifa*, cf. Abû'l-Mu'thir's title for his *sîra*) and the appropriate judgement. He does seem to be veering towards the Nizwâ party argument by admitting that al-Ṣalt failed to make his own situation clear, and the contemporary '*ulamâ'* differed about it all, (p.380) but he then reverts to the essential Rustâq thesis, that Mûsâ put Râshid forward over al-Ṣalt before declaring why he was getting rid of a *shâri* Imam who had been established in his Imamate by the *khâṣṣ wa 'âmm* of his congregation (*ra'ya*). Finally, he emphasizes the common ground that all agree that the *imâma* is a *wâjib*, and this allows him to devote the rest of this work to the non-contentious issues (rather like Abû Sa'îd al-Kudami). But in his conclusion he reiterates the essential Rustâq party argument, the principle laid down by Abû 'Abdullâh to the Hadramis that it was a major *jawr* to depose an Imam without full discussion, and quoting his son Bashîr's *Sîra al-ḥukm fî'l-ḥadath* concerning the three circumstances for deposing an Imam (see above). The Rustâq party dogma was unfortunately there to stay.

#### The *siyar* literature

Leaving aside this *ḥifẓ* tradition for the moment, there is one other set of written material that existed in the early period, that of the so-called *siyar*. Such missives seem to be as old as Ibâdism itself, for two have been attributed to Ibn Ibâḍ; perhaps the earliest genuine one is Sâlim b. Dhakwân's. Some may be considered almost as private letters to other cognoscenti, while others are little more than outbursts of pious exhortations; although proclaiming certain principles and articles of faith, it would be premature to describe these as '*aqîdas*. In some, the apparent aim is to record proper practices, like Munîr's *sîra* written for the Imam Ghassân, while many are polemics dealing with doctrinal disputes, as expounded by the leading figures in Basra. It was a form still favoured by the early protagonists of the Rustâq party views concerning the deposing of al-Ṣalt.

It was the physical problems of communicating that provided the common dimension to most early *sîras*. The oral tradition had to be supplemented by written missives, particularly for

communicating with the Maghribis, as witness various extant letters from the Basran Ibâdis, including a treatise on the all-important subject of *zakât* that Abû 'Ubayda sent to Abû'l-Khaṭṭâb al-Ma'firi ('Imam', 140-4/757-61).<sup>30</sup> Basra, Oman, the Hadramawt, and perhaps some of the Ibâdi communities in Iran had a network of relatively close contact, which is why there was a marked difference between what the likes of Abû Sufyân said to the Maghribis and what he said to the Omanis and Hadramis. This distinction was further emphasized by the fact that the Rustamids led a more cosmopolitan life-style than the Omanis, who remained essentially **(p.381)** tribesmen and who developed no real *polis* with its associated cultural values. Put simply, the Omanis remained *badw* in the Ibn Khaldunian sense of that term while Tahert was *ḥaḍar*, even if the peripheries of the Rustamid state were comprised largely of Berber tribesmen. Tahert was an important centre of trade with close commercial land connections extending throughout the Maghrib and even beyond to Spain and southwards to the Soudan, whereas Oman's commerce was maritime and the foreign element confined to Sohar. Furthermore, North Africa had been a great deal more 'civilized' in the pre-Islamic period than had Arabia, and there was no overt opposition to recording material.

Such reasons, coupled to the fact that from the start the Ibâdi centres in North Africa were themselves widely separated, probably explain why written exchanges developed more strongly there than in the Mashriq. But the font of knowledge remained the Mashriq. It will be remembered how Ibn Darrar asked Abû 'Ubayda about some 300 points of law before leaving Basra, and it is more than likely that he set these down. 'Abd al-Wahhâb b. Rustam's thirst for learning was such that he sent a huge sum to the Mashriqis to obtain books, and they themselves set about collecting and copying material for him. He, in turn, compiled a collection of *fatâwâ* in reply to problems sent by the Jabal Nafûsans.<sup>31</sup> It was probably for him, or his son Aflaḥ, that the *Mudawwana* was compiled, and I suggest it was in this way too that Abû Şufra recorded a version of the origins of Ibâdism attributed to Abû Sufyân, as well as the *Âthâr* of al-Rabî'. Aflaḥ too was also responsible for a large number of *ajwiba* sent to the likes of his governor in Qanṭrâra, and he recorded *ḥadîth*, reputedly learnt from Abû Ghânim.<sup>32</sup> Once written down, it meant at once a more rigid and a more sophisticated approach to the way material was treated, as Jâbir b. Zayd early on recognized. Thus 'Amrûs b. Faṭḥ (who died in the battle of Mânû in 283/896) wrote (planned?) a work structured around the basic notion that '*ilm* developed from the three components of *tanzîl*, *sunna* and *ra'y*,<sup>33</sup> probably slightly before the first comparable Omani compilation of Ibn Ja'far; he also wrote a polemical work, *Uşûl al-daynûna al-şâfiyya* explaining the Islamic attitudes to non-Muslims and refuting the theses of the main rivals of the time, Azâriqa and Şufriyya, Mu'tazila, Murji'a and Shi'a.<sup>34</sup>

The interesting thing about this is that '*ilm* was the all embracing concept, that *sunna* was not necessarily the Prophet's, while the criterion of *qiyâs* as an acceptable limited form of *ra'y* is absent. Perhaps **(p.382)** further grist to Hallaq's thesis that Shâfi'i's supposedly normative role in developing *uşûl al-fiqh* was not that of the 3/9<sup>th</sup> in the Maghrib, where in any case the Ibâdis' *principle opponents were Mu'tazili thought and Mâliki jurisprudence.*

#### The Maghrib and Oman, a comparison<sup>35</sup>

Like the Omanis, the Maghribis also underwent major traumas at the end of the 3/9<sup>th</sup> century, but in their case the Imamate was never restored and it is perhaps worth asking why? Unlike the

Omani Imamate, which although monopolized by the Yaḥmad did at least shift around within its clans and families, the Rustamid Imamate at Tahert was purely dynastic and of foreign origin. Already challenged by the Nukkârite schism, their Imamate was again shaken by what was effectively a Jabal Nafûsan independence movement. When the *'âmil* (agent, tax collector) for the region, al-Samḥ, a son of the Imam Abû'l-Khaṭṭâb, died 'Abd al-Wahhâb failed to appoint Khalaf b. al-Samḥ, probably to prevent a dynastic right developing. So Khalaf effectively declared Tripolitania a *miṣr* in its own rights, on the grounds that *hawẓat Ṭarâbul*s was remote and cut off (*munqaṭi'a*) from Tahert. Although defeated by the new governor in 221/836 during Aflaḥ's Imamate, the so-called Khalafiyya schism did not completely die out.

Despite such opposition movements, the long reigns of 'Abd al-Raḥmân's successors saw a consolidation and remarkable expansion of the Rustamid Imamate, which was recognized by the majority of the Berber tribes (but not the Kutâma). As in Oman, another factor in the Ibâḍis' favour was that they strictly adhered to the rules of Islamic taxation and not the exactions of 'customary' levies (a feature which was also to play a role in the Fatimid *da'i*'s success in overthrowing the Aghlabids). Also relevant, is the fact that the trade routes to the Bilâd al-Sûdân via Wargla (Ibâḍi), the Djerid (Nukkârite) and Sijilmâsa (Şufri), were all (moderate) Khâriji, and as Schacht (1957) has shown, the characteristic minarets (as seen in the Mzab today) were not of African influence, as was generally thought, but Berber style transferred southwards. So with such a diverse population from so great an area recognizing the Tahert Imamate, and the city's commercial links extending its influence across the Maghrib from the Niger Bend and Ifrîqiya to the ports for Spain, the early rivalries between the Şufris, Mu'tazila and Ibâḍis were largely attenuated. So we find Şufris in Tahert and Ibâḍis in Sijilmâsa, while Mu'tazili influence was such that Bakri actually calls them *Wâṣiliyya* (p.383) *al-Ibâḍiyya*.<sup>36</sup> Debate was encouraged, rather as it had been in Baghdad in its more cosmopolitan periods, and the regime was tolerant of dissent, unlike Oman where the *'ulamâ'* called for the repression of rival schools. And, as was the case in Basra, such debate must of itself have involved at least an awareness of criteria used by others, whereas Oman remained closed to outside influences until the time of Abû 'Abdullâh, who brought an enlightenment to the severe and conservative regime prevailing in his country of adoption.

But after these three first Rustamid Imams, whose rule covered almost a complete century (itself a factor in stability), the social and political changes began to undermine the regime and the great wealth and prosperity of Tahert to change the basis of rule. 'Abd al-Raḥmân had initially established himself in Tahert with tribal support and the city began to attract many refugees and dissidents from the wider Islamic world, including merchants from the Mashriq (Kûfa, Basra, Baghdad, and Khurâsân), some of whom may have been Ibâḍis. The diversity of this population is demonstrated from the start by the fact that the six man *shûrâ* which elected 'Abd al-Wahhâb had two men of Andalusian origin and only one (Ibn Fendin) was obviously a Berber. The height of Tahert's prosperity developed under Aflaḥ, but after his death the city became dominant in the politics of the Imamate and the rulers overtly dynastic. So increasingly Tahert was made up of a multiplicity of groups from many racial origins, and included an important and influential Christian population as well as a diverse Muslim one. From now on, the townsmen nominated the Imam, more or less through popular proclamation by the leaders of the various groupings and quarters. The relationship of town and Imam was essentially based on the continuing need of the populace to have a ruler capable of maintaining order between its

---

numerous factions and through his political acumen to maintain its vital trade links. He in turn appointed the main officials after consultation, but lived outside the city, in his palace castle in the Minâ valley. This relationship first really broke down during the time of the brothers Abû Bakr and Abû'l-Yaqzan, when feuds broke into fighting, starting with Arabs *versus* Ajam (probably non-Berber refugee populations) and began to spread to some of the Berber tribes, notably igniting the feud between the Lawâta and Hawwâra. It ended up virtually as a civil war until eventually brought under control by Abû'l-Yaqzan with the support of the Ajam and the Nafûsans, from the town and the Jabal (who, Ibn Şaghîr says, almost held him in veneration), **(p.384)** both non-Arab populations. But it was a tenuous peace and from now on factional animosities became reflected in championing rivals in the Rustamid family. As the Imam lost authority, the Berber tribes more or less abandoned Ibâḍism, which for them had little to do with theology and points of law, but the ability of the Imam and his officials to maintain discipline and settle disputes. Tahert was now ready to fall to a new power, an example of the penultimate stage in an Ibn Khaldûnian cycle.

In Oman, by contrast, the Imam remained at the centre of a tribal state. In so far as there was a Tahert, it was Sohar. Apart from Ghassân's temporary excursus into that cosmopolitan centre, the Imamate always remained fixed in the tribal interior, which is one of the reasons why 'Azzân b. al-Şaqr stipulated the seat of the Imam was his castle in Nizwâ. Whether at Nizwâ or Rustâq, the support of the regime remained vested in the tribes. Certainly the riches generated from overseas commerce became a factor of growing importance, and distribution of wealth and office a source of potential dispute from Muhannâ's time onwards, but in the Tahert case the Rustamids had themselves become cosmopolitan urbanites and the decadence represented by the Imam Abû Bakr was only temporarily checked by his brother, who just managed to hold the state together until his own death. But there was more to it than that. Whereas Oman was physically protected by its insularity and the Ibâḍis could retreat into its mountainous fastnesses, the Maghribi Ibâḍi state was always challenged by its neighbours. In the west by the 'Alid Idrisis and in the east by the Arab Aghlabids, governors for the Sunni 'Abbasids; which meant making alliances with non-Ibâḍi powers, the Midrarids of Sijilmâsa and an ever closer link with the Umayyads of Cordoba (Mâlîki) under whom members of the Rustamid family held high office. So as the state weakened the alien powers were at hand, ready to strike. The Nafûsans were the first to go down, to the Aghlabids in the ferocious battle of Mânû (283/896) and were crushed by the terrible retribution that followed. With their main bulwark in the east gone, the Tahert Imamate itself was fully vulnerable. Yet the final blow came from an unexpected direction, that of the Mahdi's *dâ'i* proclaiming the Imamate of 'Ali's descent, the forerunner of the Fatimid state.

Following his successes in Tripolitania, the *dâ'i* 'Abdullâh 'al-Shi'i', en route for Sijilmâsa where the Mahdi was held, entered Tahert unopposed, putting an end to Rustamid rule in 296/909. The only real opposition now came from the Ibâḍi-Nukkâr who had survived, based on the prosperous oases of the Djerid (Jarîd, southern Tunisia) at the head of the routes through Zawîla in the Fezzan (reopened by the Ibâḍis after the overthrow of the Tulûnids) and Kawâr to Lake Chad, the main route for the slave trade. To the west, they linked up with the oases of Sadrât and nearby Warjlân (Wargla) where the Tahert Ibâḍis had taken refuge and **(p.385)** maintained their trade with the kingdom of Gao, via the Berber market town of Tâdmekka on the southern edge of the Sahara.<sup>37</sup> Nukkâr propaganda found many converts, and established a sort

---

of Imamate under Abû 'Ammâr 'Abd al-Ḥamîd. It was one of his pupils, Abû Yazîd Makhlad b. Kaydâd, originating from Tâdmekka, who led a formidable uprising that seriously threatened the Fatimid state in North Africa. One feature of interest is that it redeveloped radicalism absent in Wahbiyya Ibâḍism. In Oman the Ibâḍis might be said to have suffered from their *qa'ada* roots, preaching a scrupulous respect of other Muslims when fighting them. Admirable as that might be, it was not necessarily the best way of stirring a population into a major rebellion, and it will be noted that in Oman the Ibâḍi successes against the occupying powers in Sohar stemmed more from the weaknesses of their enemies than any great military feats. The tribes might be stirred by ideology, but the prospect of *ghanîma* and revenge were probably more powerful tools. Abû Yazîd doubtless appreciated that, and reverted to some of the precedents of the more radical Khâriji movements, preaching against the 'Alid claimants the equality of all before God (he himself was probably of half slave origins), showing his own humility by riding a donkey, and proclaiming the doctrine of *isti'râḍ*. But after his initial successes in 332/944 and his recognition by the Mâliki jurists at Qayrawân, he quickly assumed regal powers and abandoned the donkey. Nevertheless, he had his coins struck with the *lâ ḥukm* slogan, reminiscent of Qaṭari b. Fujâ'a. But it was not for long and his great revolt came to an end in 335/947. Some sort of Nukkartite state may have survived in south-eastern Andalus during the first half of the 5/11<sup>th</sup> century under the B. Barzâl before it was brought to an end in 459/1067.<sup>38</sup>

The story of Ibâḍism was now one of continuing retreat, from the Wargla oases to the Pentapolis of the Mzab, with small communities surviving elsewhere, notably in the Jabal Nafûsa and also on Jerba Island. Such communities were not self-sufficient and depended on trade and temporary emigration to cities for work. From now on the 'ulamâ' dropped all hopes of re-establishing an Imamate. Rather, their concern became that of conserving Ibâḍi ideology in their communities, whether at home or temporarily abroad.

### Convergence with Sunnism

From this review it is clear that the Maghribis were more exposed to rival doctrines than the Omanis, even at the height of the Rustamid Imamate when open debate seems to have been encouraged, all of which facilitated (p.386) a shift towards the now dominant (Mâliki) Sunnis. So while there was a certain parallelism in doctrinal development, the Maghribis tended to be more exposed to the new norms. In both regions there was effectively a policy of trying to show that they were more orthodox than the orthodox and of avoiding overt controversy. Nothing in the Imam Râshid b. Sa'îd's epistle to Manşûra is contentious; it is a statement of pure Islamic values, and the criticism of *jabâbira* is not pointed at any specific regime. In other words, the Ibâḍis were taking an orthodox line that no Sunni Muslim could fault and avoided airing divergences in matters theological. In any case, the doctrines they challenged were mostly those that the Sunnis also rejected: such matters as the Creation of the Qur'ân were debates of the past (it is not even clear that the Omanis subscribed to the Created Qur'ân dogma then). The main subversive challenge remained Mu'tazili thought, as witness 'Awtabi's diatribe against the use of human reasoning ('*aql*) as a source of law (see below), and in this too there was no divergence with Sunni orthodoxy.

Nevertheless, such convergence towards Sunnism represented a challenge to Ibâḍi identity; and this they countered by suggesting they were the first to have said most of the things that the

Sunnis upheld. Perhaps the earliest manifestation of this was in *Tafsîr*. The mysterious *Tafsîr* of the Imam 'Abd al-Rahmân b. Rustam, which nobody had ever seen but was reputedly on sale in a *sûq* during the life of 'Abdullâh b. Muhammad al-Lawâti (432-528/1041-1133), is quite clearly a fable, aimed like the *hadîth* collection, at proving an antiquity to compete with that of the Sunnis. Ibn Şaghîr quite specifically states that this first Rustamid Imam wrote nothing. Hûd's *Tafsîr* was derivative from an earlier non-Ibâdî work. Similarly the title of the Omani Abû'l-Ḥawâri, *Tafsîr khams mi'at âya* is certainly suggestive of the much earlier work of that title by Muqâtil b. Ḥayyân al-Azdi (d. 150/767), an identity Kharusi (2004) confirms: all that al-Ḥawari did was to make adjustments to bring into line with Ibâdî thought. One cannot help but notice that the growing frequency of works named after, or modeled on those of, non-Ibâdîs was a deliberate response to them.

But in the domain of *fiqh*, in Oman at least, the Ibâdîs held to their own independent line, rejecting *hadîth* scholarship, although not now averse to quoting supporting sayings from the Prophet, largely over generalities. But always, devoid of *isnâds*. That by contrast is not totally true in the Maghrib, or even perhaps in late Basran times if the *Mudawwana* and the *Jâmi' Abû Şufra* are reliable guides.

#### The *Mudawwana*

The *Mudawwana* was reportedly brought to the Imam 'Abd al-Wahhâb by its reputed author, Abû Bashîr b. Ghânim al-Khurâsâni, when he came (p.387) to visit the Maghrib. This copy was lost with the destruction of the Rustamid library but survived, thanks to 'Amrûs b. al-Faṭḥ making a clandestine copy of the author's original, which he loaned him when he left Jabal Nafûsa for Tahert.<sup>39</sup> This is the *Mudawwana al-Şughrâ*, by contrast with its expanded *Tartîb* made by Muḥammad b. Yûsuf Aṭfayyish, known as the *Mudawwana al-Kubrâ*. Its title is suggestive, for it is the same as that of Şahnûn ('Abd al-Sallâm b. Sa'id al-Tanûkhi), born and died at Qayrawân (160-240/776-854) and appointed Qadi there by the Aghlabid governor in 234/848-9. His work, along with the *Muwaṭṭa'* (in its recension by Yaḥyâ b. Yaḥyâ), formed the two major canonical texts of the Mâlikis in North Africa and Andalusia.<sup>40</sup> Was the title added to Abû Bashîr's compilation as an Ibâdî rebuttal?

Van Ess thinks it is a conflation of at least two, if not three works by Abû Ghânim, brought together at a later date. As I stated in my *Der Islam* article there are certain signs of tampering in the temporal as well as the textual field, perhaps associated with improving the Ibâdî internal transmission line. If Abû Ghânim really knew 'Amrûs (d.283/896), and if the Imam Aflâḥ did in fact get the *hadîth* that are recorded in a *ziyâda* to al-Rabî's supposed *Jâmi' al-Şaḥîḥ* from Abû Ghânim, then it is much more likely that he actually came to the Maghrib when Aflâḥ was Imam (208-58?/823-72?). Also important is the fact that Abû Ghânim obtained his material from intermediaries (confirmed in the *ziyâda*), although the work gives the impression he was asking direct (primarily) two of al-Rabî's dissident pupils, Abû'l-Mu'arrij and 'Abdullâh b. 'Abd al-'Azîz (cf. chapter VII), which is probably why some attribute the work to 'Abdullâh b. Yazîd al-Fazâri.<sup>41</sup> Like the transmission of al-Rabî's *Âthâr* (Abû Şufra Ḥaytham) the intermediaries are dropped once the original full line has been initially stated.<sup>42</sup> Even so, there is mighty little sign of a full *isnâd* higher than al-Rabî and Abû 'Ubayda. Just occasionally in some matter of great

importance, such as permitted witnesses, we get a line that goes back to Ibn 'Abbâs through Jâbir b. Zayd, but even then it is to a Companion and not to the Prophet. Nevertheless, we do also find forms like al-Rabi's 'we learn from (*balaghanâ 'an*) 'Abdullâh b. Mas'ûid from the Prophet',<sup>43</sup> or Abd al-'Azîz's 'we learn from the Prophet'; and there is also the very occasional transmission back through Jâbir ‹ Ibn 'Abbâs ‹ Prophet. All of which indicate that at the time of the *Mudawwana*, the *mursal* or *munqaṭi'* traditions were known to the Ibâḍis, but the full *marfû'* tradition was extremely rare and interestingly enough passes through the 'Ibâḍi' line.

**(p.388)** If this is genuine then it does indicate, at least in the Maghrib, some development of an *isnâd* tradition passing through Jâbir at a time when Abû Sufyân (who is also an important source along with Wâ'il in the *Mudawwana*) was still active in Basra. This tendency may indeed have originated there, if the *Jâmi'* of Abû Şufra is indicative. In this work, as reconstructed, Abû Şufra seems to quote *ḥadîth* for *faḍîla* and in the specific matters of commerce. I have not analyzed it thoroughly, but we do see him occasionally quoting *munqaṭi'* traditions, notably via Ayyûb al-Sakhtiyâni to Ibn Sîrîn sometimes coupled to al-Rabi's name, while Qatâda also features (including transmitting once from Jâbir b. Zayd); and we have transmissions going back to Nakhâ'i and Ibn 'Abbâs. Ibn Sîrîn, who was a contemporary and close friend of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri and secretary to Anas b. Mâlik, had a major reputation as a *muḥaddith*, while Qatâda b. Di'âma, who was both his and al-Ḥasan's pupil, was considered a reliable source for Jâbir by the Ibâḍis, as shown in chapter VI. Another source was the Basran Muḥammad b. Ziyâd al-Qurashî al-Jamhi. So it is quite likely therefore, that such prominent local *muḥaddithûn* may have left their mark with the Basran Ibâḍis. Certainly Abû Sa'id al-Kudami who reports some of Abû Şufra's material (via Ibn Ja'far, apparently) is quite content to take it on board as a prelude to giving his own opinion on commercial practices. All this needs proper examination by an expert, and it is encouraging that Francesca is doing so, with particular reference to commercial law, which as early as Jâbir b. Zayd receives specific treatment, and which as late as Ibn Baraka retains elements that may show early Medinese custom.<sup>44</sup> I would simply repeat here, that this Abû Şufra of the *Jâmi'* is the same as the man who wrote to the Ruḥayli brothers giving Ibâḍi opinion in Iraq on the created Qur'ân and it is he who transmits the *Âthâr* of al-Rabi' and I believe the *K. Abi Sufyân*. It was part of the material sent by the Basrans for the edification of the Imams 'Abd al-Wahhâb and Aflâḥ (*see* further chapter XIV).

So perhaps Ibâḍi *fiqh* in the Maghrib, encouraged perhaps by the late Iraḳi Ibâḍis, was beginning to conform to Sunni criteria in the first third of the 3/9<sup>th</sup> century, and itself producing chains, not entirely Ibâḍi, along the lines of the Sunni schools in this period. But again, it is hard to be sure how much this is retrospective improvement. *Ḥadîth* hardly come to light in any form in Oman until the time of foreign occupation and even then without *isnâd*. Nevertheless, the Sunni influence may well have made itself felt in a growing tendency to record an Ibâḍi line of transmission and indeed, perhaps through the influence of Abû Şufra's *Jâmi'*, non-Ibâḍi *isnâds* even started creeping into Oman too. This Ibâḍi line of transmission becomes finalized in the *ḥamalât al-'ilm* list of the Rustâq school, **(p.389)** passing from Jâbir b. Zayd and through him Ibn 'Abbâs and other Companions to the Prophet down to Ibn Baraka and al-Bisyâni, as elaborated by al-'Awtabi. So we will end our chapter on the 5/11<sup>th</sup> century with an introduction of this great 'âlim whose work marks a transition into the next.



## Al-'Awtabi

It is not for me to assess that formidable work of Islamic scholarship known as the *Ḍiyâ' fî'l-fiqh wa'l-sharî'a* by Sal(a)ma b. Muslim (al)-'Awtabi, nor to say how much is original and how much derivative. I have only really studied the printed version of Book III, whose significance in the evolution of Ibâḍism as a *madhhab* will be discussed in the final chapter. But it is clearly a masterpiece of clarity and logic and full of neat aphorisms, like 'anything *ḥasan* is *ḥalâl* but all that is *ḥalâl* is not *ḥasari*'. The initial discourse in Book III on such matters as *uṣûl*, *ajsâm*, *a'râd*, *ma'na*, *qiyâs*, *ijmâ'*, and so on shows how 'Awtabi proceeds from simple definitions and examples of use, to the different aspects of the notions involved and their relationship as guides for interpretation. It also demonstrates that the author is widely versed in the views of other schools and theologies, even though rarely quoting them, preferring to synthesize them in his own *exposé*. But it is also a work of high dogma, cut and dried like his extreme Rustâq party views. So like *ḥudûd* and *ḥuqûq, barâ'a* is quite categorically stated to be an *aṣl* in its own right, despite what anyone else might say, while he dryly pronounces that what comes from the Qur'ân is *fard*, from the Prophet *sunna*, and from the just Imams *âthâr*. In other words, the work is a major advance in its formulations and overview, but is also authoritarian as well as authoritative. No wonder it is so often quoted by those who followed.

Assuming for the moment that the author of the famous *Ansâb* and the *Ḍiyâ'* are the work of the same man, it is now possible both to date him and appraise some of his background. The family owed its name to the quarter of Sohar nearby which the terrible but decisive civil war battle of al-Qâ' (278/892) was fought. Tribally, they were almost certainly from the B. Ṭâhiyya,<sup>45</sup> the Ḥajr 'Imrân Azd clan which in the early days formed a rather independent group in Basra, and so 'cousins' of the shaikhly Atîk who derived from Asd b. 'Imrân and whose Batina coast centre was at nearby Hijâr. As shown in Chapter XI, their leaders were very much to the fore in raising the Yaman alliance in the Sohar area, while their names, Muslim and Aḥmad, sons of 'Isâ b. Salma al-'Awtabi, indicate the **(p.390)** run of family names. It is clearly through the family tradition also, that 'Awtabi recorded in detail the course of the battles of the civil war and the detailed history of such tribes as the B. Salîma: and it also indicates why he was very much of the Rustâq party.

This is confirmed by his teacher line,<sup>46</sup> Sa'îd b. Quraysh b. Ḥamdullâh ‹ Muḥammad b. Mukhtâr and others ‹ al-Bisyâni ‹ Ibn Baraka etc. Both in the *Ḍiyâ'* and the *Ansâb* we see the high repute he holds al-Bisyâni and his teachers, Muḥammad Abû'l-Ḥasan al-Nizwâni and Ibn Baraka. It also helps date 'Awtabi, for Sa'îd is two generations on from al-Bisyâni whose own teacher, Ibn Baraka, was taught, *inter alia*, by the Ruḥayli Imam (d. 328/939-40). I have found nothing about Muḥammad b. Mukhtâr except that in '*ulamâ'* lists he bears the *nisba* of al-Nakhal (the home town of the Shâdhân b. al-Ṣalt line): but 'Awtabi's own teacher, Shaykh Sa'îd b. Quraysh was important. He originated from 'Aqr Nizwâ<sup>47</sup> and the *Bayân al-Shar'* (e.g. vol. xxxix) quotes him (with the additional *kunya* of Abû Qâsim) as a direct source from Ibn Baraka. If he should be the same as, or more likely the father of, Abû 'Ali al-Ḥasan b. Sa'îd b. Quraysh (d.453/1061) who was Qadi of the Imam Râshid b. Sa'îd and signatory of the Rustâq dogma decree, then we have both an explanation of 'Awtabi's extremist Rustâq party approach, and a further indication of his dates. *A priori* I think 'Awtabi was born around the 440s and was a quasi contemporary of

Muḥammad b. Ibrâhîm al-Kindi (d. 508/1115) whose *Bayân al-Shar'* quotes both the *Ḍiyâ'* and 'Awtabi's teacher.

A *terminus a quo* for his death is provided by the letter he wrote to the brothers 'Ali b. 'Ali and Ḥasan b. 'Ali of Kilwa, founders I have suggested<sup>48</sup> of the 'Shirâzi' dynasty there. In this he discusses the furore around the siege of 'Aqr Nizwâ by the Imam Muḥammad b. Abi Ghassân, and quoting the *Sîra al-Barara* by the the *Muṣannaf's* author; that event probably dates to the first decade of the 6/12<sup>th</sup> century. By this time 'Awtabi was established as the grand old man of the Batina. Sohar was his home and his immediate teacher line is quite different from that of his great Kindi contemporaries from Nizwâ who, although of the Rustâq party in principle, did not 'descend' from the more extreme 'ulamâ' of the Bahlâ area. Sohar was by now in decline, but still remained the main Omani port, and as we shall see in the next chapter was controlled by a local dynasty, possibly Nabâhina of 'Atîk, which recognized the overall suzerainty of the Saljuqs of Kirman. So the Omanis were still very much active overseas and as the leading 'âlim (probably chief Qadi) 'Awtabi was concerned with propagating the true *dîn*.

**(p.391)** The question of whether there were two 'Awtabis stem from three or four interrelated issues, some of which led me to vacillate concerning the date of the *Ansâb* and which have been highlighted by Al-Salmi followed by Al-Naboodah.<sup>49</sup> The first is that 'Awtabi has very little to say about the Ibâdis. That may perhaps be because the principal tribes to which they belonged (notably the Shanu'a Azd) are precisely those parts which are missing from the existing manuscripts. Certainly he has a biography of Ibn Baraka and his works and uses the term *ḥâmil al-'ilm* for both his teacher and his pupil al-Bisyâni. These were the great teachers whom 'Awtabi of the *Ḍiyâ'* followed when he developed his *ḥamalât al-'ilm* lists (see below). And it is also relevant to note that both works show the author as a considerable scholar, steeped in Arab culture and poetry.<sup>50</sup> This partly answers the next question: how could someone who could write a work like the *Ḍiyâ'* write the secular *Ansâb*? Apart from the fact it is not a purely secular work, that seems a somewhat specious argument, rather like asking how could Ṭabari (d. 310/923) write his famous history and a *Tafsîr*? The *Ansâb* may have been a work of 'Awtabi's younger days and the fact that it supposedly dealt with Kings and Caliphs down to 345/956-7<sup>51</sup> might be a complement to his now lost *K. al-Imâma*. In any case, the Prophet said 'know your genealogy', and 'Awtabi was instructing the Omanis precisely in that, and in the process recording something of their history and personalities. It should be remembered too that this was a period when the past was being actively recorded, as witness the *taqyîdât* works 'Awtabi mentions in discussing Ibn Baraka.

His choice of 345 AH is, however, more puzzling. It does not necessarily indicate the time he was writing and could be because it was about now that the Nizwan Imamate came to an end. Nevertheless, none of his sources (Ibn Qutayba, Hamdâni, etc.) seems to be later than the mid-4/10<sup>th</sup> century, except al-Andalusi.<sup>52</sup> Cross-checks confirm to me that this must be Ibn Ḥazm (384-456/994-1064), whose *Ansâb* dates to between 422 and 432, and not 'Abd al-Malik b. Ḥabîb al-Andalusi (d. 238/852) as Naboodah states. As against that, in his biography of Ibn Durayd (d. 321/933) 'Awtabi mentions a story told him by a Persian from Shîrâz who attended his funeral (at Baghdad); which, if correct, is incompatible with the author of the *Ḍiyâ'*.

---

**(p.392)** A lesser problem stems from our author's *kunya*. In the *Lum'a* (pp. 78 and 84) al-Sâlimi states in the one place that Abû Ibrâhîm wrote the *Ḍiyâ'* and in the other that Abû'l-Mundhir the *Ansâb* and the *K. al-Imâma*. These *kunyas* are not really borne out by other sources. In neither manuscript of the *Ansâb* I used is a *kunya* ascribed, nor in the Anon. list of books, which simply has Salma b. Muslim al-'Awtabi al-Şuĥârî with two works, the *Ḍiyâ'* and the *K. al-Imâma*. The earliest I have traced the name in the form Abû'l-Mundhir Salma b. Muslim b. Ibrâhîm is in the *K. al-Taqyîd* (whose *Ḍiyâ'* the compiler frequently quotes, albeit long postdating Ibn Baraka). Ibn Maddâd<sup>53</sup> quite specifically states that the author of the *Ḍiyâ'*'s *kunya* was Abû'l-Mundhir and this is borne out by later (derivative?) sources. Personally, I think al-Sâlimi simply made a slip and that this rather hasty hodge-podge work is not to be taken as an authoritative statement that there were two authors.<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, I take the Ibn Ĥazm evidence to outweigh that of the Ibn Durayd report, which might have referred to a story recounted to him at second hand. I remain fairly convinced they are one and the same person, but am not prepared to be categorical. If indeed the *Ansâb* author is different, then I too would tend to place him in the mid-4/10<sup>th</sup> century.

#### Ĥamalât al-madħħab

But whatever the case, the author of the *Ḍiyâ'* lived in the second half of the 5/11<sup>th</sup> century and died fairly early on in the next. His letter to the Kilwans, in which he says, 'we have heard that you are engaged in *tashdîd al-dîn*', indicates the nature of Ibâḍî proselytizing during this period, and may be compared to Râshid b. Sa'îd's earlier *sîra* to Mañşûra. But whereas the Imam had simply exhorted the recipients to the proper life of a true Muslim, 'Awtabi is prepared to do battle on the intellectual front concerning interpreting the dîn. In this letter and other of his writings it is clear he is particularly concerned to stamp out Mu'tazili influence over the use of human reasoning ('aql), and in countering the Shâfi'is, the main rivals of the Ibâḍîs generally in southern Arabia and East Africa. In doing so, he considers Ibâḍism as a *madħħab* in its own right and he also develops the theme of the one true *firqâ* amongst the seventy-three. The originality of the Ibâḍî *madħħab* is developed in a formal list of transmission, which starts (or rather ends) with the two great masters of the Rustâq school. So (iii. 149-50<sup>55</sup>) al-Bisyâni *ħamal al-madħħab* from Ibn Baraka, **(p.393)** who *ħamal* from Abû Mâlik, Abû Qaĥţân and Abû Marwân, with no mention of the neutralist Ruĥayli Imam Abû Qâsim Sa'îd, although Abû 'Abdullâh's sons 'Abdullâh and his brother Bashîr are given as the main transmitters of the previous generation; and so on back to the four 'missionaries' who *ħamal* from al-Rabî' and other Basra *fuqahâ'*; al-Rabî' and Ṭâlib al-Ĥaqq *ħamal* from Jâbir b. Zayd < 'Ab-dullâh b. 'Abbâs < 'Umar b. al-Khaţţâb and 'Â'isha. Jâbir, he adds, met seventy of those *Şaĥâba* who were at Badar and *ħamal al-ilm* from them (a variant implies that of these Ibn 'Abbâs was the most important<sup>56</sup>) and he also *ħamal* from 'Â'isha and 'Umar: whence from the Prophet, Gabriel, and God.

Several things should be noted from this. The first is that we now have a transmission line of true teachers, building on each other, that goes back through Jâbir b. Zayd, who himself not only collected what he learnt from Ibn 'Abbâs and seventy of the earliest Muslims but also from 'Umar b. al-Khaţţâb and 'Â'isha direct 'Umar!). If we look at the predecessors for his line,<sup>57</sup> it really starts with a sort of list of worthies in *walâya* produced by Abû'l-Mu'thir, the first real proponent of the Rustâq school. It is a fairish jumble of names, beginning with a list of the

original righteous *khurûj* (Nahrawan, Nukhayla, etc., down to 'Urwa and Abû Bilâl). Then comes *Imâm al-Muslimîn* 'Abdullâh b. Ibâd and *sâ'ir Imâm al-Muslimîn* Jâbir b. Zayd, which I take to mean the guiding Imam. And it ends with three *â'immat wa fuqahâ'*, Sa'îd b. Muhriz, Waḍḍâh b. 'Uqba, and Abû 'Abdullâh. No higher ascendancy of Jâbir nor de scent beyond these three, all of whom had died before the dissension over the deposing of al-Şalt. Al-Bisyâni also has a list of those in *walâya* and *barâ'a* but this begins with the names of some of the earliest famous Companions, while the Ibâdi list starts with Jâbir, Abû Bilal Mirdas and 'Urwa, 'Abdullâh b. Ibâd, Şuḥâr b. 'Abd and Ja'far b. al-Sammân, and so on, and ends with the Omani Imams from al-Wârith to al-Şalt (to which someone has anachronistically added Râshid b. Sa'îd) and Abû Khâlid Qaḥtân. There is no explicit statement of a transmission line. 'Awtabi too, has a detailed list of such names (iii. 72-4), but this is distinct from his *ḥamalât al-'ilm* list. His *barâ'a* list clearly indicates his extreme attachment to the Rustâq party, for as well as specific names like al-Ḥawâri b. 'Abdullâh (the 'rebel' Ḥuddâni Imam) it also condemns any who doubt (*shakk*) in the evils of Mûsâ and Râshid b. al-Nazr and all those who contradict (*mukhâlif*) the Muslims in word or deed. *Shakk* by now quite clearly means all who doubt the Rustâq party thesis. It was 'Awtabi who formulated the *ḥamal* lineage and it is significant that it is with him too that it ends (cf. Qalhâti, Ibn Maddâd, etc.).

**(p.394)** A further point of interest is that in this transmission line the name of Abû 'Ubayda Muslim b. Abi Karîma does not feature: al-Rabî' carries the *'ilm* direct from Jâbir. That this is not a slip is brought out by a similar list in another work (iii. appendix p. 211) where Mûsâ b. 'Ali and others *ḥamal* from Abû 'Ubayda and others, who *ḥamal* from al-Rabî', while he and others *ḥamal* from Jâbir who *ḥamal* from 'Â'isha, 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭâb and 'Abdullâh b. al-'Abbâs, and so back to the Prophet, Gabriel, and God. It is not that Abû 'Ubayda is unknown to 'Awtabi. He frequently quotes him and he appears in his *walâya* list. Rather, it is that Abû 'Ubayda is a secondary figure, while al-Rabî' is promoted as the key figure in transmitting from Jâbir, whose own position has been so exalted that he actually knew 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭâb! The significance of this will become apparent in Chapter 14.

Here it will suffice to say that, while there is convergence towards the Abû Sufyân-Maghribi historical account, 'Awtabi has relegated Abû 'Ubayda, whereas in what became the standard model he is the second Basran 'Imam'. 'Awtabi's treatment tends to confirm my own thesis (Chapter 6) that Abû 'Ubayda's role has been exaggerated in the history of the movement (although not denying his importance as a great teacher), and that the real leaders in activating Ibâdism were Ḥâjib followed by al-Rabî'. So 'Awtabi has made al-Rabî' the central figure for accessing Jâbir, but for the Maghribis it is as the pupil and successor of Abû 'Ubayda that he acquires position. Whichever way round, the ground has been prepared for al-Rabî' to become the author of the Ibâdi *ḥadîth* collection. But not quite yet.

Before discussing these final stages, we need to appreciate the changing background developing in both Oman and the Maghrib during the 6/12<sup>th</sup> century and see how two quite divergent paths began to emerge to ensure survival of the communities in two very different regions.

Notes:

(1) pp. 155 ff.

(2) *Muṣannaf*, x., ch. 15. He absolutely insists that the weak Imam may not spend the *bayt al-mâl* since he does not have 'ilm.

(3) Cf. Wilkinson 1987: 370.

(4) 1977 (notably in the Appendix) and 1987: 189 ff.

(5) *Muṣannaf*, x., ch. 61.

(6) Acceptance by an Ibâḍî qadi of a position in *jabâbira* government was well established by the precedent of Mûsâ b. 'Ali who had served under the Julandâ, on the grounds that it could only ameliorate corrupt government.

(7) I discuss these cases fully in my 1977 Appendix.

(8) Cf. *Jâmi' Aḥmad b. Maddâd*, 147.

(9) Cook 1997.

(10) MNHC edn. 1985.

(11) Anon., list of books.

(12) MNHC edn. 1988. This was published after I had studied it from several MNHC MSS in 1982.

(13) From MNHC MS 1331.

(14) 'Isâ Yahyâ al-Bârûni's edn. is from a Dâr al-Kutub MS originating from Jabal Nafûsa.

(15) For a list, see Custers 2006: i. 59.

(16) Indeed, the whole *exposé* on this subject in the *Muṣannaf*, §12 is lifted straight out of Ibn Baraka's work.

(17) Bârûni edn., i. 101.

(18) Cf. *Ḥujja 'alâ man yubṭil al-su'âl al-wâqi' bi 'umân* (described in Ennami 1970: 10-11).

(19) Bârûni edn., ii. 534 ff.

(20) *Jâmi' Abi Şufra*, no. 51.

(21) Bakkûsh edn., no. 27, p. 420.

(22) Quoted Wolfson 1976: 13.

(23) Hallaq 1993.

- (24) al-Sâlimi, *Lum'a*, 21; see also the editor's footnote to Darjini's biography (ii. 496) of Abû Ya'qûb al-Mazâti (cf. Ch. 14), and C&Z 340-1.
- (25) Juynboll 1973, plus Excursus.
- (26) His sources tend to confirm his death-date of 472.
- (27) Ibn Maddâd, *Sîra*; Anon. A.
- (28) Seen in MNHC library. The author of the *Muṣannaf* wrote at least five other works, including one on grammar (cf. Anon., list of books).
- (29) e.g. in 479 (variant 477) he asked Abû Bakr Aḥmad b. Muḥammad, known as al-Mu'allim (d. 510), to confirm what his father(?) had written in 428 concerning a Nizwân *falaj* dispute; and he also writes of another *falaj* dispute in 488.
- (30) For references see C&Z 304-5. According to Ennami (1970: item 2), however, it was addressed to one Ismâ'îl b. Sulaymân al-Maghribi.
- (31) Ibn Ṣaghîr, 73; Ennami 1970: items in 4-1, cf. also 14.
- (32) Ennami 1970 item 5; Wilkinson 1985, 232.
- (33) Darjini ii, 321: planned to write? (see Ennami 1970 under 12-2.).
- (34) Ennami 1970 item 12-1.
- (35) The following is largely a synthesis of sources already quoted for the Maghrib (along with numerous articles, mostly by Lewicki, in *EI2*); references will be held to a minimum.
- (36) Lewicki, 1958. Wâṣil, of course, refers to Wâṣil b. 'Aṭâ who sent one of his pupils as a missionary to the Maghrib and whose doctrine had a wide success with many of the Berber tribes. So Wâṣiliyya came to be more or less synonymous with Mu'tazila in early times (for details see van Ess 1976, n48).
- (37) For Tâdmekka see Lewicki 1979.
- (38) Bakkûsh 1984.
- (39) Darjini ii, 323.
- (40) Cf. Calder 1993 ch.1.
- (41) Schacht 1956 no. 16: see further in Chapter 14.
- (42) Kharusi (*Thesis*) points out that the same applies to the *Muwaṭṭa'*.
- (43) Ibn Sallâm also quotes Ibn Mas'ûd for what the Prophet said (eg. p. 114).

(44) Cf. Francesca 2002 (on *ribâ*, notably) and 2003.

(45) Cf. A73v/AB52 where Abû Ishâq (b. Ibrâhîm in AB) b. Muslim al-Ṭâḥi al-'Awtabi speaks of the origins of Qaḥtân genealogy.

(46) Ibn Maddâd *Sîra* 271r; also in Anon A.

(47) QS viii, 308.

(48) Wilkinson 1981 & 1989 dealing with the *Kilwa Sira*.

(49) The former in *Nizwâ* (vol. xxi) and the latter in *J. Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies* (2006), both articles in Arabic.

(50) This is also clear from his extant *exposé K. al-Ibâna (fî-l lugha al-'arabiyya)*, which I have not seen; cf. al-Malkh, Hasan 2002, in Custers 2006: vol. iii.

(51) A49v, AB34v.

(52) In my original notes of more than forty years ago I noted that he also quotes Ḥarîri (446-515/1054-1121), but I can find no trace of this now.

(53) *Sîra* 269r cf. also 268v and 271r.

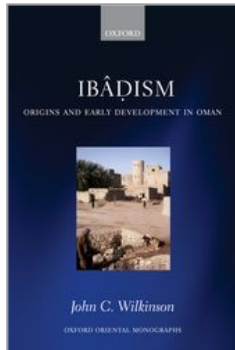
(54) Is it possible that our author was in his younger days known as Abû Ibrâhîm, but that if this son died young, he became known by another son?

(55) Reference is to the printed version of vol. III, MNHC 1990.

(56) It is clearer in a list given in *K. al-Taqyîd*, 251-2.

(57) The versions I use are those in the *K. al-Taqyîd*.

University Press Scholarship Online  
**Oxford Scholarship Online**



## **Ibâdism: Origins and Early Development in Oman**

John C. Wilkinson

Print publication date: 2010

Print ISBN-13: 9780199588268

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2011

DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.001.0001

### The 6/12th Century

John C. Wilkinson

DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.003.0013

#### **[-] Abstract and Keywords**

This chapter attempts to reconstruct the even more fragmentary history of the 6/12th century, with intermittent Imams and increasing regional dislocation, the end of Ibâdism in Hadramawt, the rise of the Nabâhina whose origins are reconsidered, the start of a major incursion of 'Amiri tribes from Bahrayn which was to shift the whole political geography of northern Oman in the ensuing centuries; likewise a major reorientation of Indian Ocean trade with the rise of the Red Sea-Mediterranean axis and expansion of Muslim colonization on the East African coast and a consequent shift of the Omani entrepôt to Qalhât in conjunction with the establishment of Hormuzi power. Yet despite this century being the prelude to Oman's 'Dark Ages', it was an era of very active Ibâdi scholarship and even missionary activities, including a re-conversion of Kilwa which was celebrated by the last major figure treated in this book, al-Qalhâti.

*Keywords:* Nabâhina, Indian Ocean trade, Sohar, Qalhât-Hormuz, tribal structure, Kilwa, Hadramawt, al-Qalhâti

#### **The 6/12<sup>th</sup>-Century Historical Background**

Difficult as it was to try and reconstruct Imamate history in the 5/11<sup>th</sup> century, the 6/12<sup>th</sup> century defies all attempts to establish a chronological sequence. For the same basic reasons, except that now Oman was being dismembered at an accelerating pace.

Three short accounts give the essentials of the story. The first features in the anonymous Imam List, which passes from 'Azzân b. Tamîm to Mâlik b. al-Ḥawâri (Imam 809-32/1407-29) with mention of only one other, the tenth, Muḥammad b. Khanbash, stated as dying in 535/1140-1 at Nizwâ, with the comment that his death was a great loss to the people of Oman the like of which there had never been before. This date is disputable and not worth discussing, any more than



the other conflicting dates recorded. The only thing that seems reasonably clear is that he succeeded his father and was elected at Sawni ('Awâbi) by, *inter alia*, the *Muṣannaf*'s author (d. 557/1162).

The second is the report of an uprising by Mûsâ b. Abi al-Mu'âli b. Mûsâ b. Nijâd against the leading power in the land, al-Sayyid Muḥammad b. Mâlik of Rustâq. His force was made up of some Yaḥmad, few of whom were *shurât* (i.e. Ibâḍi soldiers), but mostly 'Âmir Rabî'a bedu, some of whom were also with the Omanis. The Omanis from the interior got as far as Ṭaww (the foot of the mountains separating the Ghadaf from the lower Wadi Sumâyil), but weary of the campaign decided to return home and sue for peace. Strung out as they made their way over a steep pass, the Rustâq force fell on them, seizing their baggage train with their armaments and treasury, and killing large numbers, including the Imam, his brother, and the other leading Ibâḍis; many were captured or died of thirst while escaping. This is recorded as occurring in Ṣafar 579/1183.<sup>1</sup>

The third account is that the last Imam was Khalîl b. 'Abdullâh b. 'Umar b. Muḥammad b. Khalîl b. Shâdhân, a descendant of the Imam (p.396) who restored the Imamate early in the 5/11<sup>th</sup> century. He was elected at Nizwâ, where he was killed by the Nabâhina, who had already taken possession of Rustâq, Nakhâl, and the whole Batina.

The first two accounts will be taken together. Why Muḥammad b. Khanbash's death was such a tragedy is not stated (beyond the fact he was a good man), but it is fairly obvious that he was the last Imam recognized both in the Ghadaf and the Jawf, for he was elected (as also his father?) at Sawni, Râshid b. Sa'îd's old home. As shown in the previous chapter, his father might even have been the Muḥammad b. Abi Ghassân promoted by Nijâd and Abû Bakr, for we know that the author of the *Muṣannaf* was an elector of his son. By Mûsâ b. Abi al-Mu'âli's time power in the Ghadaf had passed entirely into the hands of the *mulûk* of Rustâq, and Ibâḍi resistance was confined to the Jawf. Now it was from the Manaḥi family, which had been to the fore in attempting to keep previous Imams on the straight path, that the Imam who led the rebellion against the *malik* of Rustâq came.

Already we are seeing a fragmentation of Ibâḍi support in the Jawf, which was to become all too evident when attempts made in the 9/15<sup>th</sup> century to restore the Imamate were largely undermined by rivalry between its three main centres, Manaḥ, Nizwâ, and Bahlâ. The situation then was succinctly described by the Portuguese de Barros,<sup>2</sup> who reported that while the interior had many fine towns like Izki (whose population he gives as 10,000), the three main fortified centres were Manaḥ, Nizwâ, and Bahlâ, each of which had its own 'kings'; but because of their tyranny the people had risen up to form a kind of republic of elders in which Bahlâ dominated, because it was there the Imam, to whom the people paid the tithe, lived. They united when liable to be attacked by the Benjabar (Jubûr), who had extended their power over 300 leagues south-eastwards and were held off by paying them tribute.

The 'Âmiri tribes and the break-up of the old alliances in northern Oman

The importance of these 'Benjabar' was established during the period under review. The intolerance of the Rustâq party had finally destroyed any hope of reconciliation with the northern tribes, who increasingly turned to neighbouring Bahrayn and the Persian coast

---

opposite for alliance. This is evident from the prominent role played by the 'Âmir Rabî'a as allies of the Rustâq *malik* in the defeat of the Ibâdis.

This grouping of supposed 'Âmir b. Şa 'şa 'a descent represented the last major wave of Arab migrants to enter Oman from central Arabia. The **(p.397)** history of the rivalry between the 'Abd al-Qays, who were the dominant group in Bahrayn, with the 'Âmir (Rabî'a/şa 'şa 'a) in their Yamâma hinterland goes back to pre-Islamic times, as too the 'Amiri enmity with the Shanu'a Azd (see Chapter 2). Until the Qarâmiṭa established power the 'Âmir were more or less confined to Yamâma, but during their time the 'Abd al-Qays were largely suppressed and the 'Âmir feature increasingly in Bahrayni affairs. With the reconquest by the 'Uyûnids, an 'Abdi clan was again in control of the region, but the 'Âmir remained politically active. Eventually, during the 630s and 640s (1230s and 1240s), the last of the 'Abd al-Qays dynasties went down before them, and for the next 300 or so years it was 'Uqaylid families, B. 'Uşfûr, B. Jirwân and Jubûr, who controlled power there.<sup>3</sup>

The old 'Abd al-Qays—Azd alliance had been ruptured deliberately in 'Abbasid times, whilst in the civil war the local 'Abdi tribes had joined the B. Sâma-ḥuddan confederation that had been defeated at Sohar. So it was rather to the growing power of the 'Uqaylids that the Imam Râshid b. Sa'îd had turned for assistance, and from then onwards the 'Âmir increasingly feature in Omani affairs. The first arrival of their tribes can perhaps be dated to the end of the 5/11<sup>th</sup> century. The Qarâmiṭa had already lost the Bahrayn Islands (Awâl) in 450/1058-9, but it was not until 469/1076-7 that 'Abdullâh b. 'Ali, the founder of the 'Uyûnid dynasty, started to establish power on the mainland and defeated the Qarâmiṭa, after which he dealt with their 'Âmiri allies, driving their tribesmen out towards Iraq and Oman.<sup>4</sup> He also fought off an attack by the B. Qayşar of Qays island, then the most important maritime centre in the Gulf, inflicting a severe defeat on its Amîr and imprisoning his brother.<sup>5</sup> The apogee of 'Uyûnid power came under his grandson, Muḥammad b. Abi'l-Ḥusayn Aḥmad, who established authority over all the desert borderlands from Aleppo to Oman.

So it was virtually as refugees that the 'Âmir tribes first appeared on the Oman scene. They now became the major auxiliaries for the *malik* of Rustâq, but probably as mercenaries, for some also fought on the Imam's side. A few decades later they were again to feature as auxiliaries of the Nabâhina of Sohar in their battle with the last powerful Imam of Oman, Muḥammad b. Ghassân (see below).

Their incursion was aided by further disruptions to the old alliances in northern Oman. The original friendship that had united 'Imrân Azd and the B. Sâma-Nâjiyya through the marriage of Asad that gave birth to 'Atîk had already been put under strain by the Ibâdi—Julandâ feud, and **(p.398)** was completely ruptured by the civil war in which the Nizâri B. Sâma allied with the Yamani Ḥuddân against the 'Atîk and various Mâlik b. Fahm tribes led by the B. Hinâ. The Ḥuddân remained implacable enemies and allied with the Qarâmiṭa. After their influence waned it was to the Persian coast opposite that they turned, and their enmity for the tribes of central Oman continued unabated during the Nabâhina period when in 674/1275-6 they helped the 'Shirâzis' under Fakhr al-Dîn Aḥmad and Shihâb al-Dîn in an invasion which got as far as Bahlâ. The next year (675/1277) they joined the Awlâd Ra'îs (Riyâyisa<sup>6</sup>) in a highly destructive raid on Nizwâ, which they attacked in the rear when the menfolk were away with the Nabhâni *malik*

---

who had moved to intercept the invading force. Revenge was taken and the Awlâd Ra'îs and Ḥuddân smashed.<sup>7</sup> That was the end of this famous tribe, which had played such a prominent role in seven centuries of Omani history.

So, as 'Uqaylid and 'Âmiri power expanded and any central Omani authority in northern Oman vanished, their dynasties began to establish influence there, and their tribes to form confederations with the old settlers, notably the Na'îm/Nu'aym-Âl Bu Shâmis who absorbed many of the Azd, Kinda, and B. Sâma clans, although some retained their identity in the form of the Zawâhir, the inhabitants of the region which the newcomers called the Zâhira (Dhahira). But it was not until the Jubûr, the Portuguese Benjabar, developed power in the fifteenth century that the incomers began to threaten central Oman itself.<sup>8</sup>

The final scene of our act is marked by the end of the rump Imamate that had survived off and on since Khalîl b. Shâdhân al-Kharûsi (eponym of the Khalîli lineage descending from the Imam al-Ṣalt b. Mâlik al-Kharûsi) restored the Imamate at the start of the 5/11<sup>th</sup> century with the defeat of his great-great-grandson at the hands of the Nabâhina, who already held power in the Ghadaf and Batina.

#### The Nabâhina: origins

The Nabâhina in Omani history represent the 'Dark Ages' of Ibâḍism, a dynasty whose *mulûk* ruled Oman for almost a half-a-millennium. Nothing much survives of their history in local sources: some tantalizing glimpses at the start, and some rather more solid history at the end, when they opposed attempts to re-establish the Imamate in the Jawf and were finally broken by the Ya'âruba of Rustâq (themselves probably of Nabhâni **(p.399)** origins) who re-established the Imamate in the seventeenth century. Indeed, for some 250 years in between it seems only to be a presumption that they ruled Oman.

All agree that the Nabâhina are a clan of the 'Atik, who had been extremely important in the pre-Islamic period and in the earliest days in Basra; in Oman their main settlements were in the Bahlâ—Ḥamra area and on the Batina at Hijâr, near Sohar. But in Imamate times their authority had been undermined by the fact they had backed the Julandâ, and tribally the Ḥuddân and B. Sâma counterbalanced them. In the civil war that Sâma—Ḥuddân alliance had been considerably diminished, and while the 'Second' Imamate had seen a reassertion of Yaḥmad influence, this had been largely confined to central Oman: whence their campaigns in the Sirr. So what we now see emerging are various families of an 'Atik branch generally known as the Nabâhina, some of whom had probably been influential earlier without necessarily being identified as such. One important case is the B. Mu' ammar of Samad Nizwâ, some of whom had played a role in the early attempts to restore the Imamate, notably Abû 'Abdullâh Nabhân b. 'Uthmân, who had helped sponsor the Ruḥayli Imam at Nizwâ around 320/913. It was this Nabhâni family, designated by the Kharûsi poet al-Sitâli as Bayt Abû'l-Mu' ammar,<sup>9</sup> which emerges in the 7/13<sup>th</sup> century as very much 'defenders of the faith', even though never recognized as Imams. Genealogically speaking, the name of Nabhân first features nineteen 'generations' on from 'Atik's son al-Hârith; thereafter it features six times in the next twelve generations.<sup>10</sup> In other words, the Nabâhina start to emerge well down the 'Atik line, whose *nisba* 'Atiki was still being used by the chiefs of 'Imrân in early Islamic times. Thereafter there is a plethora of Nabhâns to choose from for those claiming Nabhâni ancestry. According to al-Sitâli,<sup>11</sup> the Bayt Abû 'l-

---

Mu' ammar take their name from 'Umar, a son of Muḥammad b. 'Umar b. Nabhân, which, if correct, would seem to make him a brother of the Abû Muḥammad b. Nabhân b. 'Umar b. Nabhân, great-grandfather of the Âl Nabhân b. Kahlân from whom the main branch derives.<sup>12</sup>

The first confirmed appearance of the main Nabâhina occurs in connection with the killing of Ibn al-Nazar by the tyrant Khardullâh b. Samâ'a b. Muḥsin, who exploited the Sumâyil area and was one of the *anṣâr* of the Nabhâni al-Fallâh b. al-Muẓaffar, 'Sultân of Şuḥâr'. According to the **(p.400)** *Bahjat al-Absâr*,<sup>13</sup> Khardullâh eventually met his end at Qârût when he and his brother Jabar killed each other in a bloody battle over control of the Sumâyil Gap. Some time after that the Ibâdis joined to elect their last strong Imam, Muḥammad b. Ghassân (not to be confused with the earlier Muḥammad b. Abi Ghassân). During his time there was a serious confrontation with the Nabâhina when the Sultan of Sohar, Abû'l-Qâsim Murshid b. Murshid (grandson of the above-mentioned al-Fallâh b. al-Muẓaffar) attacked the Ibâdis with a force of more than 9,000 auxiliaries recruited from the Batina coast to supplement his own standing army, made up of his own (northern) tribesmen and mercenaries from Ḥasâ. They first took Damâ, which they plundered for ten days, killing the qadi 'Abdullâh b. Ruwâḥa, before attacking Nakhal in the hinterland where they imprisoned Muḥammad b. Yazîd al-ḥawqâni<sup>14</sup> (the governor?). In the meantime the Imam had raised his force and, under the command of Nâsir b. Sulaymân al-Ḥamḥâmi, marched through the Sumâyil Gap and inflicted a serious defeat on the Nabhâni force at al-Khawḍ, the key centre commanding the entrance at the Batina end.

Al-Salimi<sup>15</sup> is clearly unaware of this account, for this Imam occurs in a list of three whom he is not quite sure what to do with. He records that Muḥammad b. Ghassân b. 'Abdullâh al-Kharûṣi was an excellent Imam who ruled a few months short of nine years and carried on the war in Ḥasâ and Najd. They would have liked to elect him *shâri*, but had to content themselves with making him *difâ'i* 'for fear of the Caliphs of Baghdad'. A fortuitous piece of information allows us to date these events to the last couple of decades of the 6/12<sup>th</sup> century. It comes from a non-Omani source who mentions a discussion about contemporary claimants to the Imamate, amongst them the 'Khâriji' Muḥammad b. Ghassân. The context<sup>16</sup> allows us to place him with absolute certainty post-558, quasi-certainly as a contemporary of Tughtakîn's reign (578-93) and a contemporary of 'Abdullâh b. Ḥamza, that is, the Zaydi Imam Manṣûr (593-614). Indeed, the overlap theoretically indicates that Muḥammad b. Ghassân's Imamate must have covered the year 593/1196-7.

With this information we can now retrace some of the earlier history. Ibn al-Nazar was perhaps the greatest religious poet the Ibâdis have ever had. Al-Salimi recounts<sup>17</sup> the circumstances of his killing, aged 35, and the destruction of his works. Fortunately, shortly after Ibn Waṣṣâf **(p. 401)** (Muḥammad b. Waṣṣâf of Nizwâ) reconstructed some material in the form of the *Da'â'im fî'l-Islâm*. Ibn al-Nazar, as he is generally referred to, took his name from the eponymous clan then living in Sumâyil, a branch of the Qudâ'i Na'b. According to the *Khizânat al-Akhbâr*,<sup>18</sup> his full name was Abû Bakr Aḥmad b. Sulaymân b. 'Abdullâh b. Aḥmad b. al-Khaḍar b. Sulaymân, whose grandfather 'Abdullâh was *qadi al-quḍât* at Damâ and wrote two instructional books for judges, while al-Khaḍar, as already noted, was active in Râshid b. Sa'id's Imamate. On these grounds I would date Ibn al-Nazar to the early second half of the 6/12<sup>th</sup> century and our first definitive mention of a Nabhâni in the standard Omani sources therefore to the same period.

But the Sumâyl brothers who killed each other were either members or allied with the Nabhâni Sultan of Sohar, al-Fallâḥ b. al-Muẓaffar, a name whose components recur in Nabhâni history.<sup>19</sup> And the confederation his grandson put together to fight the Ibâḍi Imam from the interior consisted of his own tribal following in the north (which now included 'Âmiris), and an auxiliary army that looks to be almost a replica of the force that defeated the 'rebel' Imamate in the civil war two centuries earlier, down to the name of its commander, a descendant of that al-Ahîf b. Ḥamḥâm al-Hinâ'i who had commanded the Yamanis at the decisive Battle of al-Qâ'. So now at the end of the 6/12<sup>th</sup> century the Nabâhina of Sohar were relying on the same alliance to sustain their position there.

So when had they first established it? Since Bûyid times, I believe. Ibn Khaldûn ('*Ibar*, iv. 92-3) tells us that the B. Mukrim were from the notables of Oman and it was they who went for help to the Bûyids and with their support drove the 'Khawârij' into the mountains and gave the *khutba* to the 'Abbasids. When the Bûyids became weak in Baghdad the Mukramids became independent in Oman. Elsewhere ('*Ibar*, iv. 454), in a rather confused account concerning events after Mu'izz al-Dawla's death (see Chapter 11), he says that the government in Oman was given to 'Umar b. Nabhân al-Ṭâ iy at 'Aḍud al-Dawla's request. It was after he was killed that 'Aḍud sent the invading force which landed at Sohar (362), finally cornered and smashed the Zanġ at Rustâq, and then invaded the interior to deal with the *shurât* (Ḥafṣ b. Râshid, etc.). The *nisba* added to the name of 'Umar b. Nabhân by Ibn Khaldûn certainly shows he was from the Ṭayy, and Ṭayy from Syria had been part of al-Bûr's invading force seventy or so years earlier. But I suspect that it has been added because outside Oman Nabhâni is generally associated with the well-known Ṭayy grouping of that name, whereas the Omani Nabâhina were **(p.402)** unknown.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, Ibn al-Athir and Ibn Miskawayh speak of him as a native of Oman called Ibn Nabhân. 'Umar b. Nabhân certainly runs in the Bayt Abû'l-Mu' ammar branch of the family, while 'Umar b. Nabhân b. Kahlân lies in the middle of the twelve forebears of the Âl Nabhân, a list which I believe is more or less a proper genealogy rather than the ascent that establishes their 'tribal' connection to 'Atîk. It would certainly make sense that the local family who grew close to the Bûyids and served at their court and whom they helped establish power at Sohar should be the same as the man 'Aḍud al-Dawla had befriended.

The Mukramid family might also well be a branch of the 'Atîk, who were strongly established in nearby Hijâr, and to whom the Nabâhina, who we now know were the power in Sohar during Ibn al-Nazar's time, were related. Like the Mukramids in Bûyid times, the Nabâhina in Sohar were vassals of the Saljuqs who, following Qâwûrd's expedition, established a military governor (*shihna*), but ruled through local Arab chiefs. Their direct control started to decline after Arslânshâh's reign (495-537/1101-2-42-3), when Saljuqshâh tried to use Oman as a base to raise a rebellion.<sup>21</sup> That would have given the Nabâhina the opportunity to assert themselves from their Sohar base and profit from the disunity in the Ibâḍi ranks to take control of Rustâq. Indeed, it may already have been a Nabhâni who was the *malik* that so crushingly defeated the uprising of Mûsâ b. Abi al-Mu'âli of Manaḥ;<sup>22</sup> Mûsâ's date of election (549/1154-5) roughly coincides with the time when the Nabhâni tyrants in Sumâyl killed Ibn al-Nazar. There is interesting confirmation that Ibâḍi resistance was already largely confined to the Jawf from Idrîsi, writing about now, and who is surprisingly well informed about Oman (mentioning both 'Aqr and Su'âl as part of Nizwâ and that Manaḥ was half-a-day away and the Sirr two days

away), for he says that most of the *shurât* live in a little enclave called *Bshrûn* to the west of the country on a mountain where are found their fortified villages.<sup>23</sup> The last area of resistance on the Batina side of the mountains seems to have been Damâ and Nakhal (the home of the Shâdhân b. al-Şalt al-Kharûşi line), which the Nabâhina besieged and plundered before being temporarily checked by the last important **(p.403)** Imam from the interior, Muḥammad b. Ghassân al-Kharûşi. By then the Kharûş and Khalîli '*ulamâ'* had taken refuge in Bahlâ and it was a Khalîli who was the last Imam elected for 200 years. During the 9/15<sup>th</sup> century attempts were made to restore the Imamate from Nizwâ, Bahlâ, and Manaḥ, and it was this that finally led Sulaymân b. Sulaymân b. Muẓaffar al-Nabhâni to evict the Kharûşi families from the interior, with the help of his son-in-law Salghurshâh of Hormuz-Qalhât in 904/1498-9.<sup>24</sup> But that goes far beyond the period which concerns us.

#### The changing maritime orientation of Oman trade

Nevertheless, the alliance of the Late Nabâhina with the dynasty controlling Hormuz and Qalhât, like that of the Ḥuddân with the tribes of southern Persia in the 7/13<sup>th</sup> century, once again reflects major changes that had their origins in the 6/12<sup>th</sup> century, and is closely associated with shifts in the geographical orientation of Omani trade.

These may be traced back to the Bûyid period. By the time they established their position, Sohar had become the premier port in Indian Ocean trade. Sîrâf received a further setback when a severe earthquake that lasted almost a week virtually destroyed the town somewhere around 367/977. That, more or less, was when 'Aḍud al-Dawla extended direct rule over Oman, and also limited Julandâ b. Karkar power, by capturing Huzû on the mainland opposite Qays island from the 'Umâra, leaving them only their fortress at al-Dîkdân near the entrance to the Gulf. Under the 'Umâra-Julandâ the actual island of Qays had only been used by local fishermen, but the merchants of ruined Sîrâf quickly recognized its potential, and it was probably in the context of the rivalry between the Bûyids of Fârs and Iraq that Qays-Huzû began to develop as a new trading centre, challenging Sohar.<sup>25</sup>

#### Qays

Qays really came into its own after the collapse of Bûyid power. Initially the Saljuqs had taken little interest in Fârs, being content with the nominal allegiance of the warlike and predatory Shabânkâra tribes, so that Fârs and Shiraz reached a nadir.<sup>26</sup> Qâwurd/Qâvurd was essentially concerned with keeping open the trade from India through Kirmân to Seistan, Khurâsân, and Central Asia beyond, for which purpose he **(p.404)** requisitioned ships from the Prince of Hormuz to reoccupy the coast of Oman around the early 450s/1060s. That is our first indication that by now (Old, mainland) Hormuz had become a centre of some importance. As a result, Qays further up the Gulf was largely unconstrained, and Abû Karzâz b. Sa'd b. Qayşar tried to invade Awâl (Bahrein), where the founder of the 'Uyûnid dynasty had established his base, and was driven off with a loss of 2,800 troops at the Battle of Sitra. Towards the end of the century, however, the Saljuqs extended direct control over Fârs, establishing an Atabeg, Rukn al-Dawla Khumârtigîn, in charge. But his efforts to subject Qays came to nothing and the islanders responded by taking Sîrâf.<sup>27</sup> That finally spelt the end of the port, and when Yâqût visited it a century later it was nothing more than ruins.

Qays now really expanded. About 495/1100–1 Ibn al-Athîr<sup>28</sup> talks of an Amîr, who is described as controlling half of Oman (the Gulf coast?), Jannâba, Sîrâf, and Jazîrat B. Nafîs (Qays?), attacking Basra with a huge fleet. This is clearly the Amîr of Qays, possibly from a new dynasty, for we know there was a change from the Qaysar family at some stage. The classical sources make it fairly clear that by the middle of the century the rulers were one of those Persianized Arab groupings like the Julandâ b. Karkar, and the fact that Yâqût, who knew Qays well, calls them Ibn 'Umayra<sup>29</sup> almost certainly shows that they originated from the coastal province which bore their name, *Sîf Ibn Umâra*, which, back in Işṭakhri's time, had formed part of the Julandâ alliance. In any case, whether of the old or new dynasty, Qays had by the start of the 6/12<sup>th</sup> century become the dominant maritime power. But it took the precaution of paying allegiance, nominally at least, to the Saljuqs.

The predatory nature of their authority, as they forced shipping to call at their island and carried out raids from their naval base at Jashk, had a serious effect on maritime trade, which started to avoid the Gulf and use Aden. Unsuccessfully, the Qaysis attacked the port in 1135 AD (530–1 AH),<sup>30</sup> but while part of this trade did revert to the Gulf, the decline had set in. This shift to Aden had also partly resulted from the expansion of East African trade encouraged by settlement of the Banâdir coast and the rise of Kilwa.<sup>31</sup> At the same time, there had also been a drift westwards by the Mashriqi merchant community towards Egypt and Syria, partly brought about by the disturbed conditions in southern Iraq, initially fermented by **(p.405)** the Zanj revolt and the Qarâmiṭa, and which continued as the authority of the Baghdad Caliphs weakened. The move was reinforced as the Fatimid empire developed, engendering expansion of commercial activity along the Red Sea—south-west Arabian axis. Nevertheless, the Omanis continued to control part of that trade, for while boats would come from the East Indies to the Sofala coast direct, the East Africans always seemed to employ Omani craft, according to Idrîsi: which shows a continuation of the earlier pattern Mas'ûdi describes, when he says that whilst most ivory went to India or China, it went in Omani ships.

#### Hormuz-Qalhât

Even so, to participate effectively it was desirable to develop a port as close to the new maritime circulation patterns as possible, and it was this which played the decisive role in establishing Qalhât as the out-port of Hormuz. The origins of the Hormuzi dynasty are tied in with the legendary history of the B. Salîma Mâlik b. Fahm migration to the Persian side of the lower Gulf, where they established position in Kirmân and were recognized as Julandâ in late Sasanid times; but some remained or returned to Qalhât, then no more than a local port, and its Jabal Minqal hinterland, whence the ridiculous muddle of fact and fiction related by Ibn Mujâwir in that hodge-podge entitled *Ta'rikh al-Mustabşir*, compiled probably between 618 and 626 (start of 1220s).<sup>32</sup> But put together with the very factual account of Qalhât and other Gulf centres given by Yâqût (whose last Gulf journey was towards 613/1216–17), and the start of Pedro Teixeira's *Chronicles of the Kings of Hormuz*, some sense can be made of the situation in Qalhât and its relations with Hormuz.

It was from one of these Julandâ b. Karkar families that the Hormuzi dynasty originated. Its fortunes were stimulated initially by Qâwurd, and Yâqût in his treatment of Hormuz emphasizes it was the port through which Indian trade passed into Kirmân and its hinterland. But as he also

shows (under Kirmân), that region suffered enormously from the disorder precipitated by the rivalries of the late Saljuqs of Kirmân and their associated Oghuz/Ghuzz.<sup>33</sup> In the late 580s Malik Dînâr, now established in Jîruft, extracted a considerable tribute from Hormuz and a promise of one from Qays, then apparently extending its power onto the Oman coast, but following his death (591/1195) there came a complete breakdown of **(p.406)** order as the Ghuzz nomads ruined trade and agriculture, before it fell to the Shabânkâra of Fârs, whose exactions were no better. It was doubtless these conditions that led many to take refuge at Qalhât and the Hormuzis to fortify it in the second decade of the 7/13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>34</sup> Shortly afterwards<sup>35</sup> it fell to the Atabeg Abû Bakr b. Sa'd b. Zangi, who, with the help of the prince of Hormuz, Sayf al-Dîn Abâ Nader, occupied Qays in 628/1230 and then Awâl (Bahrein) and Qaṭîf.<sup>36</sup>

Hormuz-Qalhât now became dominant in the Gulf—Omani maritime trading pattern, and Qays's days were numbered and Sohar's in decline. Already by Idrîsi's time (his *Geography* was finished by 548/1154) Şûr, Qalhât, and Masqaṭ are featuring, whereas when Ibn Faḳîh was writing (289–90/902–3), Muscat (Masqaṭ) was the last port of call from the Gulf, essentially used as a refuge in bad weather and for taking on water.<sup>37</sup> By the time Yâqût visited, Qalhât, whose rise he believed post-dated 500, belonged to the *ṣâhib* of Hormuz and was the main port of Oman, with most of the Indian shipping calling there, while Muscat<sup>38</sup> served as a secondary port for transshipping goods destined for Kirmân and its hinterland. Qalhât's commerce clearly stimulated its hinterland and Ibn Mujâwir gives details of a route running from Jalân to Şûr and Qalhât: it marked the beginning of a new importance for the Sharqiyya. Further along the southern coast, Raysût, which in Hamdâni's time (first half of 4/10<sup>th</sup> century) was the unavoidable centre from where the route from Aden branched off to Oman, had long since fallen into ruin and been replaced by a new town at Zafâr.<sup>39</sup> So the triangle Hormuz, Qalhât, and Tîz on the Makran coast largely replace the old trilogy of Obollah—Siraf—Sohar, although the old Omani entrepot did still retain some importance locally.

But the most interesting features to emerge from this history of change is that Oman was still very much involved in Indian Ocean maritime trade and that the population of Qalhât, every man jack of them, was openly and unashamedly proclaiming itself to be an Ibâḍî Khâriji when Yâqût called. This in contrast with the situation when Ibn Baṭṭûṭa visited Qalhât (in the period 727–30/1327–30), for he states that while most of Qalhât's inhabitants were Khawârij, they could not profess openly because they **(p.407)** were under the Sunni Qutub al-Dîn Tamahtan, King of Hormuz.<sup>40</sup> That, however, very much reflected the period of major change after Qutub al-Dîn moved his capital offshore to Hormuz island, destroyed the power of Qays, and took control of the coasts of Bahrayn, thereby finally establishing the fortunes of Hormuz which lasted until the arrival of the Portuguese.<sup>41</sup> That is a period that goes beyond the scope of this book. What interests us is the changing scene in the century preceding Ibn Battûta's visit when the Qalhâtis were very much openly professing their faith and indeed still proselytizing.

### The Kilwa *Sîra*

I have already written at length<sup>42</sup> on the subject of the *Maqâma al-Kilwiyya* composed by Abû 'Abdullâh (not Abû Sa'îd) Muḥammad b. Sa'îd al-Azdi al-Qalhâti, the main item along with 'Awtabi's *sîra* that forms the composite manuscript in the MNHC entitled *al-Sîra al-Kilwiyya*. A



list of his contemporaries makes it clear that the mission to Kilwa in which he was involved dates to the turn of the 6-7/12-13<sup>th</sup> century.

The background seems to be that the people of Kilwa, the main centre in 'Bilâd al-Zanj' (i.e. the Sofala coast of East Africa), were Ibâdis and had agreed to choose their leader from the line (*awlâd*) of Walîd b. Sulaymân b. Yârak/Bârak al-Nîsâbûri, that is, from a family originating from the one-time capital of Khurâsân, more or less destroyed in the middle of the 6/12<sup>th</sup> century. This represented a change of dynasty from the brothers 'Ali and al-Ḥasan b. 'Ali, to whom 'Awtabi wrote at the beginning of the century, and who, I have argued, were from the so-called 'Shirâzi' family with which Kilwa's first main expansion is associated. The sixteenth-century *Kilwa Chronicle*<sup>43</sup> shows it was characterized by consultative rule, but that it became increasingly absentee and dynastic and came to an end after three generations. In this chronicle the origins of the family are associated with the Azd dispersal story, and in the Portuguese version<sup>44</sup> its founder supposedly sailed from Hormuz. In fact I suspect that they were yet another group that came from the Kirmân (p.408) region, of Julandâ b. Karkar/B. Salîma origins, and the name arises because the last emanation of Gulf influence in East Africa came from Shirâz (whose merchant network operated through Qays), and which for a short time in the 7/13<sup>th</sup> century expanded into the Indian Ocean, almost eclipsing Hormuz which was racked by a dynastic war.<sup>45</sup> It is these Shirâzis, too, who so nearly succeeded in invading interior Oman (see below). In any case, by the end of the 6/12<sup>th</sup> century the Ibâdis of Kilwa had switched allegiance to a distinguished family of Nishapur origins, one of whom had probably been chief Qadi of the preceding dynasty.

However, as always dynastic disputes again arose. Thus the *Maqâma* (and its commentary, written almost a century afterwards) reveals that as a result of the Ibâdis selecting Yârak after his father, Walîd b. Sulaymân, died his brother Mughîra adopted the creed of a man designated as Abû 'Aliyân who came from Lower Iraq (specifically Kûfa, al-Ḥilla, Zikiyya, al-Sawâd, and the Basra region from Obullah to beyond 'Abâdân) and had already been successfully converting the masses. His message was some extreme form of Twelver Shi'ism attributed to the mysterious 'Abdullâh b. Saba' (here called Sabî'a b. Abi Ṭâlib), in which the Ghurâbiyya heresy was rooted.<sup>46</sup> So Yârak appealed to the Omanis, who decided to send Abû 'Abdullâh Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Bashri al-Manaḥi, 'the youngest but wisest of them', and Qalhâti arranged his passage when the ships left for 'Bilâd al-Zanj, which is Kilwa'. Upon his arrival he managed to re-convert one of the apostates and with his help formed a small band of missionaries who gradually brought the people back to Ibâdism, though not Mughîra. Back in Qalhât he recounted what had happened to al-Qalhâti, who celebrated it by writing his *Maqâma*.

The Omani missionary's task was perhaps not as formidable as it sounds. The appeal of extremist Shi'ism was for the masses, who were governed by an elite whose social status largely depended on the support of the religious *khaṣṣ*. It was not in their interest to see the kind of popular religious fervour that had installed itself in that hotbed of social revolution in southern Iraq taking hold of the African populace. The Ibâdis' real rivalry was with the much more sober Shâfi'is, and it is against them that Qalhâti's work is really directed (see next chapter). Some confirmation of the Omani success comes from Ibn Mujâwir, writing around this time, who was told that the Kilwans had reverted from the Shâfi'i school to 'Khârijism'.

---

The names of those to whom Qalhâti appealed to help Yârak is also **(p.409)** revealing of the situation in Oman at that time, and I have detailed them in my 1989 article. Among them was 'Abd al-Sallâm b. Sa'îd b. Aḥmad (d. 622/1225), who came from Qarya (near Ḥamrâ), part of whose work on *tawḥîd wa tafsîrihi 'alâ madhhab al-Muslimîn* (note the use of the word *madhhab*) and modelled on the *K. al-Firdaws* is included in the Kilwa manuscript. Grandson of the Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Şâlih who taught the author of the *Muṣannaf*, the family produced distinguished 'ulamâ' over several generations. One, Sa'îd b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad (d. 632/1234-5), also from Qarya, is always mentioned as a contemporary of al-Aṣamm, that is, 'Uthmân b. Abi 'Abdullâh b. Aḥmad al-'Uzri ('Uzûr, B. Sâma) from 'Aqr Nizwa (d. 631/1234), perhaps the best-known of Qalhâti's contemporaries. His *laqab* arose, not because he was deaf, but because he pretended to be in order to be present when a rather shy lady had to explain delicate details in a complaint he was dealing with. The most famous of his many works was the fifty-one volume *al-Tâj*. Also listed are a half-dozen others names, including Muḥammad, the son of another well-known author, Abû'l-Qâsim Sa'îd b. Muḥammad al-Shajabi al-Quḍâ'i (d. 572/1177); 'Umar b. Muḥammad, a direct descendant of the famous religious poet Ibn al-Nazar and almost certainly the son of Abû 'Abdullâh Muḥammad b. 'Umar b. Aḥmad b. 'Abdullâh? b. al-Nazar who carries the *nisba* al-Falûji (d. 585/1189); a Yaḥmadi from Bahlâ, whose poetry contains a stanza saying how he would like to have met the Kilwan Walîd b. Sulaymân;<sup>47</sup> and finally the man selected, Abû 'Abdullâh Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Bashri (Muḥarib, B. Hinâ), interestingly from Manaḥ, which had become perhaps the principal centre of resistance to the *mulûk* in the Ghadaf.

All these names and dates indicate that the mission took place around the start of the 7/13<sup>th</sup> century, that is, just at the time Qalhât was really established, and confirm that Ibâḍi activism in the interior of Oman was confined to the Jawf, with three centres, Manaḥ, Nizwâ, and the Bahlâ area. But the support for the Kilwans could only be moral and did no more than stave off the demise of Ibâḍism there. And whilst Hormuz, which by now had become completely Persianized, may have continued to trade with East Africa through Şûr and Qalhât, the political influence from the Gulf waned as that of south-west Arabia grew. By the middle of the thirteenth century Hadrami and Yemeni influence was considerable there, and by about 1275 the Mahdali dynasty of Sayyid origins controlled Kilwa and introduced a new 'correct' *madhhab*, as the Kilwa Chronicles clearly indicate.<sup>48</sup> The Shâfi'i school had won out, as Ibn Baṭṭûṭa also makes evident in his treatment of East Africa.

#### **(p.410)** The Hadramawt

By then Ibâḍism was more or less dead in the Hadramawt. After the Sulayḥid victory in 445/1063 they reinstalled the Ma'n as their vassals in southern Yemen, who then declared their independence, as did their replacements, the Zuray', while around the end of the century the Sulayḥids themselves suffered a serious defeat at the hands of the Najâḥ and their dynasty finally came to an end in 1138. In the Hadramawt the vacuum was filled by three quasi-independent local sultanates, based on Tarîm, Shibâm, and Shiḥr. This fragmentation, which characterized Yemen as a whole, was put to an end by the cruel and largely absentee rule of the Ayyûbids (1174-1229), backed by the Rasûlids whom they brought from Cairo. Hadramawt was subjected in 575/1179, but the distant province was soon in rebellion and was again reduced, with difficulty, in 612/1215. The following year the Hadramis massacred those left in charge,

which led to such a vicious reprisal that a sort of sacred alliance under the Nahd re-established the independence of the province in 621/1224. In spite of, or perhaps because of, their violence, the Ayyûbids had failed to pacify Yemen and Hadramawt, and the Zaydis on the northern plateaux continued to resist ferociously. It was only when the Rasûlids acquired independent authority (1229-1454) that a less violent approach to government developed.<sup>49</sup>

It is perhaps this background which explains how the Hadrami Ibâḍis may have survived. Indeed, Al-Salmi has an interesting *sîra*<sup>50</sup> from someone in Oman belonging to the Rustâq school exhorting the Hadramis 'to be more objective and responsible to the Imamate'. Since it quotes Ibn al-Nazar's poetry, this indicates that an Imamate of sorts may have survived there, temporarily and sporadically, from (say) the last quarter of the 5/11<sup>th</sup> and possibly well into the 6/12<sup>th</sup> centuries. Some confirmation comes from the fact that Abû Ya'qûb al-Warjlâni (d. 570/1174) is recorded as asking Aḥmad al-Ḥadrami for the views of his community about the Creation of the Qur'ân, and it is possible that some Ibâḍis may have survived in Yemen and Hadramawt until the 9/15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, Ibâḍism was doomed, and its moment of glory under Abû Ishâq had largely depended on Omani support. But that was now largely confined to the Jawf, and even there the last flickers of the Imamate had died out by the early 7/13<sup>th</sup> century. But not Ibâḍism itself, as the Kilwa mission and the names of those associated indicate.

**(p.411)** Curiously enough, and counter to all Ibâḍi political correctness, it was defended by the Mu'ammâr Nabâhina of Samad Nizwâ. And the person who sang their praises was none other than a Kharûṣi poet from Istâl, Abû Bakr Aḥmad b. Sa'îd (584-676/1188-1277), who moved to Nizwâ in the time of Dhuhl b. 'Umar b. Mu'ammâr al-Nabhâni when he saw there was a potential market there for his versifications. On two occasions at least these Nabâhina showed they were worthy of that fulsome praise. The first was in protecting Omanis from Hormuz. In Qalhât a major change took place when a former governor, Maḥmûd al-Qalhâti, known in the Omani chronicles as Maḥmûd b. Aḥmad al-Kûsti/Kûsi/Kâshi, seized power at Hormuz, defied his Kirmâni overlord, and established his authority in the Gulf. Arriving in Qalhât (660/1262), he tried to obtain the obedience of the Nizwân Nabhânis, Abû'l-Mu'âli Kahlân b. Nabhân and his brother 'Umar. Abû'l-Mu'âli told him that the Omanis were too poor to pay and in any case he only ruled over one region (the Jawf). Maḥmûd, aware of the problems of launching an expedition to the interior, tried to bribe him by offering troops to take possession of the rest of the country. Unsuccessful, he now raised a force from the bedu, promising them wealth and whetting their appetites by first taking them by sea to plunder Zafâr (Dhofar), where a dynasty originating from near Shibâm in the Hadramawt, the Ḥabûḍis, had developed a new town after destroying the old (in 618 or 619/1221-2)<sup>52</sup> and were now challenging Hormuz-Qalhât trade as well as defying the Rasûlids in Hadramawt, plundering shipping going to Aden. From there he set off overland for Oman, sending the commissariat round by sea. The desert country (Jiddat al-Ḥarâsîs) proved itself as a natural defence and 5,000 of his troops died of hunger and thirst.<sup>53</sup>

The second occasion was during the struggle against the Persians, when 'Umar (who had succeeded his brother) fought off a Shirâzi expedition for four months, during which time the invaders unsuccessfully besieged Bahlâ, and again in 675/1276-7, during the time of 'Umar's son Kahlân, when the Awlâd Ra'îs (probably Balûsh who by now were established in Kirmân and the Makrân and possibly in northern Oman), supported by the disloyal Ḥuddân, mounted an

attack. While Kahlân and the people of 'Aqr moved out to engage them in the desert, leaving Nizwâ defenceless, the invaders entered it, plundering, carrying off the women, burning the *sûq*, the treasury of the Friday mosque, along with the books, all in the (p.412) course of half-a-day. As we have seen, the Omanis exacted a serious retribution.

So with the Omanis surviving and still active in their little inland island of the Jawf, without an Imam, but protected by the local Nabhâni Sultanate, we may leave our historical analysis and return to the development of Ibâdism in this period.

Notes:

- (1) Anon. A. For an abbreviated version see *Tuḥfa*, i. 342. This date is difficult to reconcile with the supposed date of the Imam's election, 549/1154-5.
- (2) de Barros, *da Asia*, Dec. II,3,ii.
- (3) al-Aḥsâ'i 1960: 118 ff; al-ḥumaydân 1983. Note that Al-Aḥsâ'i's main source for this period is Ibn Muqarrîb whose *floruit* was in the second half of the 6/12<sup>th</sup> cent. Cf. also Caskeel 1949.
- (4) Cf. *EI2* 'Abd al-Qays and al-Baḥrayn.
- (5) al-Aḥsâ'i 1960: 101.
- (6) Almost certainly part of the Baluch groupings that had reached Kirmân by the 4/10<sup>th</sup> cent. and the Makran coast by at least the 7/13<sup>th</sup>.
- (7) Ibn Maddâd MS, f. 283; *Tuḥfa*, i. 353-4.
- (8) For an account see Wilkinson 1987: 212-18.
- (9) *Dîwân*, 435.
- (10) I have used the genealogy as cited by Siyâbi 1965: 116; cf. also *Nahḍa*, 92.
- (11) *Dîwân*, 352-3.
- (12) For an essay in sorting out the relationships between the various groups, see Al-Salmi/Salimi 2002.
- (13) Source quoted by Sâlim b. Muḥammad al-Ruwâḥî (who draws on a number of untraced sources), made in 1311/1893, and incorporated in the 1932 edition of Ibn al-Nazar's *Da' a'im*. Al-Ruwâḥî also quotes extensively his contemporary, the Zanzibar qadi Yaḥyâ b. Khalfân b. Abi Nabhân b. Jâ'id b. Khamîs al-Kharûṣî.
- (14) i.e. from Ḥawqayn, near the exit from the mountains of the Wadi B. Ghâfir (and the original home of the al-Sâlimi family).
- (15) *Tuḥfa*, i. 336.

(16) Stern 1951: n. 201.

(17) *Tuhfa*, i. 354–6.

(18) Another of al-Ruwâḥi's sources.

(19) Muẓaffar was a common name in the Nabhâni dynasties, but not in that of the B. Mu' ammar; it was also used by the Bûyids (perhaps reinforcing my argument that their Mukramid vassals were Nabâhina). Al-Fallâḥ reoccurs in late Nabâhina times.

(20) True, the Ṭayy of Oman are part of the Nabhân, but they were of no political importance in our period.

(21) Cf. Houtsma 1885: 368–70, 376; *Cambridge History of Iran*, v. 88–9, 134, 173–84; *EI2* Saljûkids under Saljuqs of Kirmân; also Ibn Mujâwir, ii. 284–5.

(22) The fact that Muḥammad b. Mâlik is referred to with the title of al-Sayyid, regularly used for the Nabâhina, adds to the probability.

(23) *Bshrûn* is obviously a corruption, but of what? One interesting feature of Idrîsi's account is his Wadi Falah/Falaj that waters all these settlements on the inside of the mountains and exits at Julfâra, which is clearly a misunderstanding of the *falaj* irrigation system. The same misconception features on many Portuguese maps (for details see Wilkinson 1964: 345).

(24) For details and references see Wilkinson 1987 and for further details of the Hormuz-Qalhât context see Bhacker and Bhacker 2004.

(25) Tentative reconstruction from Muqaddasi, 426–7, 432; Yâqût, arts. Huzû and al-Dîkdân, *ibid.* *Udabâ'*, 483; *Nuzhat al-Qulûb*, 116; Ibn Mujâwir, ii. 287–8.

(26) The essential study for this changing situation is Aubin 1959.

(27) Cf. notably *Fârs Nâmeḥ* (*JRAS* 1912 and its introduction by Le Strange), 322–3.

(28) x. 233–4. For this period see also Ibn Balkhi, 322–3.

(29) In *Buldân* art. Sîrâf: under Qays itself he does not name the dynasty. For the Persianized-Arabic discussion see notably Yâqût under Baḥr al-Fârs where he tries to explain the Arabization Kîsh } Qays in terms of the semi-legendary history of the Arab colonization of the Persian coast; cf. also Idrisi, i. 152 and Ibn Mujâwir, ii. 288–91.

(30) Cf. Idrîsi, i. 152–4; Yâqût, art. Jâsak; Goitein 1954.

(31) See my 1981 and 1989 articles dealing with the Kilwa *Sîra* and its background.

(32) Cf. G. Rentz on this author in *EI2*. G.R. Smith in various articles has shown that two Ibn Mujâwirs have been confused and our author is not the great scholar who died aged 90 in 690 AH.

(33) For details of this period see *EI2*, Kirmân (Lambton); Houtsma 1885: 335 ff.; *Cambridge History of Iran*, v. 173–4; Yâqût, art. Kîsh.

(34) Power in Kirmân was temporarily usurped by a Şaffarid whom Hormuz was forced to acknowledge, but the Khawarzmishahs firmly brought both Kirmân and Hormuz back into their orbit (Ibn Mujâwir variously in 614, 615, 617: Ibn al-Athîr, xii. 108, says 611). One of the firmer pieces of information we get from Ibn Mujâwir, ii. 272–4, 282 is that a wall was built around the city in 615/1218 or 617.

(35) Ibn Mujâwir seems to imply in 1220, after 'Alâ al-Dîn Muḥammad b. Tekish (596–617/1200–20) had been killed.

(36) Aubin 1953.

(37) Ibn Faqîh, 11. Cf. also *Silsilat al-Tawârîkh* (16 and 180–1).

(38) Ibn Mujâwir ii. 284.

(39) *Ibid.* 268.

(40) Paris edn. (1853), ii. 226. Al-Sâlimi, *Tuḥfa*, i. 358–68 is quite right to tear into Ibn Baṭṭûṭa's account, which shows all the signs of bad journalism. My own view is that he did visit Qalhât and picked up some material concerning the interior, recounting it as though he had actually gone there. However, I think al-Sâlimi is going too far when he takes issue that the Omanis could not make apparent their religion: Ibn Baṭṭûṭa is specifically referring to Qalhât, and it is quite likely that in the areas under direct Hormuz domination they did have to exercise a degree of *kitmân* by this time.

(41) For details see Aubin 1953 and Bhacker and Bhacker 2004.

(42) Wilkinson 1981 and 1989.

(43) See References, *K. al-Sulwa fî akhbâr Kilwa*.

(44) De Barros, *Asia*, Dec.I.

(45) Cf. Bhacker and Bhacker 2004: 36–7 and particularly n. 32 for the Ṭîbi merchant prince family of 'Mâlîk al-Islâm'.

(46) Cf. *EI2*, arts. Ghurâbiyya (Goldziher) and Ghulât (Hodgson). For Kûfan origins of *ghulû* and the superhuman status of the *ahl al-bayt* and the terrible revenge that will be taken on Abu Bakr and 'Umar see Turner 2006.

(47) *KD* 529–30.

(48) Cf. notably Martin 1974 and Saad 1979.

(49) The above paragraph is based on Chelhod *et al.* 1984: 36–42.

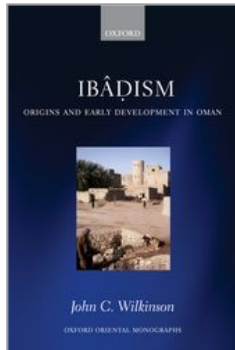
(50) Thesis, no. cxx (*non vidi*).

(51) Al-Salmi 2009: 509, quoting a modern history of Hadramawt. Ibn Mujâwir, ii. 278, thought there were still some in Şan 'â' in his time.

(52) Apparently to deny it to the Ayyûbids (Smith 1988, based on Ibn Mujâwir and Ibn Khaldûn). A Rasûlid expedition finally established authority in both Hadramawt and Dhofar in 677/1278 (see also Costa 1979).

(53) Al-Salimi, *Tuḥfa*, i. 353, based probably on the *Kashf* and Ibn Maddâd *Sira*, whence also the next para. For further details of the expedition and Mahmûd's career see Bhacker and Bhacker 2004.

University Press Scholarship Online  
Oxford Scholarship Online



## Ibâdism: Origins and Early Development in Oman

John C. Wilkinson

Print publication date: 2010

Print ISBN-13: 9780199588268

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2011

DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.001.0001

## Madhhabization

John C. Wilkinson

DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.003.0014

### [–] Abstract and Keywords

This chapter examines the final stages in Ibâdism developing as a *madhhab*. In Oman it was essentially the work of 'Awtabi who finalized the process of conforming to the criteria of the Shâfi'i-Ash'ari school, but avoiding the Sunni criteria of *hadîth* scholarship by formalizing a chain of Ibâdî *hamalat al-'ilm*, whose *âthâr* provide the equivalent of the Sunni *isnâd* chains. A comparison is made between developments in Oman and the Maghrib where two trends evolved — one introspective, aimed at ensuring the survival of true values in the small communities like the Mزاب; the other to establish oneself as the true *firqa* and go out and do battle with the others. The latter approach prevailed in Oman, but in a 5–6/11–12th century revivalist movement in the Maghrib it went to the extent of Abû Ya'qûb al-Warjlânî 'Arranging (*Tartîb*)' a *hadîth* collection, supposedly essentially transmitted by al-Rabî' b. Habîb from Abû 'Ubayda and back through Jâbir b. Zayd to Ibn 'Abbâs and the first Muslims. The origins of this work (along with other important Mashriqî material preserved in the Maghrib, notably the *Mudawwana*) is examined and shown to be a manipulation that has done great disservice to the Ibâdîs, leading them to be called the 'Fifthers' in the Maghrib. At the same time, the Maghribis rationalized the early history of Ibâdism with a line of Imams in *kitmân* in Basra, exaggerating the role of Abû 'Ubayda and eliminating the key role played by other proto-Ibâdîs. It was only really with the development of an Ibâdî renaissance from the 17th century onwards and yet further conformism of the *madhhab* to Sunni norms that this *hadîth* collection found nominal acceptance in Oman along with the Maghribi model of Ibâdî origins.

*Keywords:* madhhabization, 'Awtabi, Shâfi'i, Oman, Maghrib, Ibâdî origins, Ibâdism, Mudawwana, hadîth



Just as the 6/12<sup>th</sup> century saw Ibâḍism shifting from a still politically active movement to one struggling for survival, so the very nature of its rationale also became modified. This is quite clear from comparing 'Awtabi's *exposé* around the beginning of the century to that of Qalhâti at the start of the next.

### 'Awtabi and Shâfi'i

'Awtabi's opening on *uṣûl* in Book III of his *Ḍiyâ'* shows how far Ibâḍi thought had become aligned with Sunni, with one great exception, the critique for reliable *ḥadîth*. So, he starts: 'Truth (*ḥaqq*) derives from four elements, the Qur'ân, the Sunna, *ijmâ'*, and *ḥujja t al-'aql*. Some say also *tawâtir al-akhbâr* (i.e. widely transmitted statements from which necessary knowledge derives).' This complements his statement that what comes from the Qur'ân is *fard*, from the Prophet *sunna*, and from the just Imams *âthâr*. The first element, the Qur'ân, is common to both Sunnis and Ibâḍis and needs no comment. For the Ibâḍis, there was by now nothing seriously in dispute concerning fundamental *ta'wîl* and they were also producing their own *tafsîr*.

With regards to Sunna, 'Awtabi has also adopted the same basic criterion as Shâfi'i: it is purely and simply *sunnat al-nabî*. According to Schacht's well known thesis<sup>1</sup>

Shâfi'i was the first lawyer to define *sunna* as the model behaviour of the Prophet, in contrast with his predecessors for whom it was not necessarily connected with the Prophet ... Two generations before Shâfi'i reference to traditions from Companions and Successors was the rule, to traditions from the Prophet himself the exception, and it was left to Shâfi'i to make the exception his principle.

That does not necessarily mean that 'Awtabi had derived his definition from Shâfi'i. The obligation to adhere to the *sunnat al-nabî* had always been present in Ibâḍism, but it is clear that this limiting use of the term **(p.414)** had been taking hold during the century in which the Shâfi'i school had come to the fore. Shâfi'i's own influence in the 3/9<sup>th</sup> century has been exaggerated, according to Hallaq (1993). Ibn Ḥanbal is said to have told one of his students that the traditionist had no use for his books while Bukhâri and Muslim record not a single tradition from him. It was Ibn Surayj and his pupils in the 4/10<sup>th</sup> century who established his reputation as the originator of the *uṣûl al-fîqh* principles. Shâfi'i was himself not uninfluenced by Mu'tazilism and his strength had been in finding a middle way between the traditionalists and the rationalists through a limited form of *ra'y*, *qiyâs*. His was 'the first attempt at synthesizing the disciplined exercise of human reasoning and the complete assimilation of revelation as the basis of the law ... His law and jurisprudence represented not the pivotal point of Islamic law but rather a crude beginnings at the outset of the [2/]8<sup>th</sup> century and the true culmination that took place nearly a century after his death.'

'Awtabi is fully aware of the tension between the *aṣḥâb al-ḥadîth wa'l-âthâr* and the *aṣḥâb al-ra'y*. The former rely only on what is recounted from the Prophet, the Companions, and the *Tâbi 'în* for both *fîqh* and what was *halâl wa harâm*; and that using *qiyâs* from *ra'y* was not permitted (*wa mâ naqîs bi ra'yinâ*) etc. (he also notes that they agree that faith is both words and deeds, and that they say the Qur'ân is not created and declare those who do so are *kuffâr*, etc.).

'Awtabi is probably referring to the extremist Zâhiriyya approach in this *exposé*, but it should be

noted that he never uses the term Sunnis but assimilates them under the term *aṣḥâb al-ḥadîth*. Nor does Ibn Baraka who, a century earlier, condemns them. Theirs, he says, was essentially the *ṭarîqat al-`aql*, not that of *al-sam`*. `Aql could not provide proof of a *farîda* (religious obligation) and at best was a *faḍîla* (commendable); by `aql he probably meant also its limited form of reasoning, *qiyâs*.

So whether under Shâfi`i influence or not, once the Ibâḍis accepted that *sunna* is what comes from the Prophet, two questions immediately arose. First, what of the *sunna* of the early Muslims, of Abû Bakr and `Umar? It is clear from at least as early as Shabîb b. `Aṭiyya and Ḥâjib al-Ṭâ`iy that the early *sunna*, including that of the Prophet, had been assimilated into the *âthâr*. The *âthâr al-â imma* are those matters that the `ulamâ` *al-Muslimîn* had agreed, including what Bashîr b. Abi `Abdullâh called generally accepted *riwâyat*; and `Awtabi specifically designates this common ground by the term *ijmâ`*. That is why he adds the term *wa`l-âthâr* to the *aṣḥâb al-ḥadîth*, to indicate that the Ibâḍis were now aligned with the same approach, but rather than using the Sunni criterion of *ḥadîth* transmission they were using their own *âthâr* line. So here again he has quite explicitly accepted the third Sunni criterion of consensus. Indeed, when discussing *ijmâ`* he even cites the famous *ḥadîth* (without even identifying (p.415) it as such) that the *umma* would never agree on an error (*khata`*); and he comments that it has been said that the *umma* in any period is the *ahl al-ḥaqq wa jamâ`at ahl al-ḥaqq*.

But what remains to be explained is how these *âthâr* were derived. For the Sunnis the answer is simple: they had the six great collections of *ḥadîth*, the most important of which had been compiled in the first half of the 3/9<sup>th</sup> century (Bukhârî d. 256, Muslim d. 261, etc.). The argument between the *aṣḥâb al-ḥadîth* and *aṣḥâb al-ra`y* in fact was over the criteria to interpret them, whether a limited form of *ra`y* designated *qiyâs* was permitted or not. It was an issue very much to the fore in that century and was what divided the Zâhiriyya from the Shâfi`is; both these schools were influential in Oman (see below). But for the period covered by this book these standard *ḥadîth* collections did not form overt works of reference for the Ibâḍis. Furthermore, if we look at what Jâbir b. Zayd said, or the *âthâr* of al-Rabî` which form part of the Ibâḍi *âthâr*, all is virtually opinion (*ra`y*), only occasionally is there a hint of how it might have been derived. In other words, the early Ibâḍis along with the proto-Sunnis would have been classified with the *aṣḥâb al-ra`y*. Which is why Ibn Baraka says that those who now claimed to have this new revealed truth had no right to condemn others to eternal hellfire. What of those who were good Muslims before these new revelations?

What is interesting is to examine how long *ra`y* lasted among the Ibâḍis. Here the Maghribis seem to differ from `Awtabi. The three equivalents of the Qur`ân, the *sunna*, and the *âthâr* in the *K. al-Waqd`* of the Nafûsan (Abû Zakariyyâ` b. al-Khayr) al-Jannâwuni (probably first half 6/12<sup>th</sup> century), are *tanzîl* (the Qur`ân), the *sunna*, and in one place *ra`y*, in another *ijmâ`*. As Rubinacci and Cuperly in their studies<sup>2</sup> of this author have argued, *ray* was personal reflection concerning the two basic sources and became assimilated into *ijmâ`*; its limited form of *qiyâs* was not referred to until much later. Even Abû Ya`qûb Yûsuf al-Warjlani (d. 570/1174) continued to use the very general form `aql. That identification of *ra`y* with `aql seems in some measure to conform with what Abû Sa`îd al-Kudami had written back in the early 4/10<sup>th</sup> century: 'the *sunna*,

---

all of it, is what illuminates (*ta'wîl*) God's Book, in the same way as the *ijmâ'* is what explains God's Book ... and the opinion of the *ahl al-ra'y* of the Muslims, extracting argument from intelligence (*yukhraj ḥujja min al-ma' qûl*).<sup>1</sup> Nothing in the Maghribi sources, nor indeed in Abû Sa'îd al-Kudami, implies that *sunna* was confined to the Prophet. Yet there does seem to be a convergence between Abû Sa'îd's *yukhraj ḥujja min al-ma' qûl* with Shâfi'i's *qiyâs*, that is, to infer from the two primary sources its inherent concept (*ma' qûl al-aşl*). In the *Muhârabâ* Bashîr speaks of (p.416) insights (*'uqûl*) that God has provided as proof, guidance in the true path. He expands on this in his *K. al-Raşf* (§§14–21) in connection with *tafsîr alma'lûm wa'l-majhûl*, explaining that *'ilm* has two *ḍarb*, *ḥiss wa qiyâs*. The latter is the true path. There can be no *'ḥujja 'aqaliyya wa dalâla ghariziyya dûna samâ' ...*<sup>2</sup> In other words, proof must be based on the guidance of revealed law; which is what Ibn Baraka was also saying when he stated that at best *'aql* might be valid for a *fađîla*, but not a *farîḍa*. But Bashîr's work is strongly tinted with Mu'tazilism, whereas 'Awtabi is basically talking about *ijtihâd* as deriving from a holistic theological-cum-legal concept, analogous to that of the Shâfi'i-Ash'arites. He reinforces the point by quoting al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-Ḥallâbi, 'one of our *qawm*', that all guides (*dalâ'il*) to the *shar'* have two forms (*ḍarb*), *aşl wa ma' qûl aşl*. This shift towards the Shâfi'i criterion becomes explicit in his subsequent elaborations.

It is possible that part of the difference between the Maghribi and Omani Ibâdîs over *'aql* is due to the regional influence of the Mâliki and Shâfi'i schools and because Mu'tazilism was deeply rooted in North Africa. Although 'Awtabi does not use the term Sunni, he does speak specifically of these two *fiqh* schools, which he pairs, simply saying that they dispute over many things and are much in error. Nevertheless, in error or not, 'Awtabi does not reject the fourth Shâfi'i criterion, *qiyâs*. As part of his initial *exposé* on *uşûl* he defines two terms, *aşâm* and *'arâḍ*. The former are essentially natural objects (day and night, the stars, rocks, mountains, etc.), the latter human properties. They include any human *ḥarakât*, magic, illness, doings, power, weakness, sleep, service, acts, any happenings (*aḥdâth*) with a temporal dimension, natural or otherwise, and both forms of *'ilm* and *'aql* (these forms he deals with elsewhere). It will be observed that the old debates from Mu'tazili times of whether Allâh was a *jism* and the impossibility of dissociating *al-jawhar wa'l-'arâḍ* is not even considered. Like it or not, 'Awtabi was highly influenced by the new Sunni theological schools. So if *'ilm* and *'aql* are human and not divine qualities, then there has to be some hermeneutic link for interpreting the scriptures. Once again the answer is more or less that of the Sunni-Ash'arites, *'illa*. *'Illa* is a *ma'nâ*, in other words an intrinsic quality of God's essence, 'from which one seeks that guidance which is the proof of God (*ḥujjat Allâh*)', 'Awtabi explains. (This, incidentally is the first use I have consciously noticed of the term *ma'nâ* in Mashriqi authors; see also his *exposé* on the subject in the References). So it forms that *ḥujjat al-'aql*, the fourth element which, as he stated initially, made up the *ḥaqq*. To emphasize this 'Awtabi starts his next chapter, which is specifically devoted to *qiyâs*, by stating that *qiyâs* is not permitted without *'ilal* (*wa lâ yajûz yuqâs illâ alâ ma'lûl*). And in his development of the subject he discusses *ra'y*, which he couples with *ijtihâd* as the *aşhâb al-ra'y* did, and (p.417) launches into a series of what look like *mawqûf ḥadîth* from Companions to make his point, that no *ra'y* became accepted until proof was given of the validity of the opinion that was in dispute.

So 'Awtabi seems to have gone all the way with Shâfi'i with the one exception of proof by *ḥadīth* scholarship. By his logic, the *â'immat al-Muslimîn* had established the *âthâr* by *ijmâ'* based on the Qur'ân and the Sunna and had used *qiyâs* to establish acceptable *ḥadīth*, but with no reference to the *isnâd* criterion for judging the reliability of a Prophetic transmission. The *â'immat al-Muslimîn* were themselves the transmitters. That is why 'Awtabi had two categories of who they were. The first designated the main figures considered as in *walâya*. The list is a jumble of the leading '*ulamâ'* in rough chronological order, but not neatly ordered by *ṭabaqât* (very much a Maghribi approach). In this appear all those 'proto-Ibâḍis', Ḍumâm, Abû Nûḥ, Ja'far al-Sammâk, and so on, and significantly, as we shall see, Abû 'Ubayda. This is followed by a *barâ'a* list which includes the usual names from the first *fitna*, followed by those more specific to Ibâḍi disputes, Hârûn [b. al-Yamân] and his son 'Abdullâh and their followers and partisans, plus those who demonstrated they were using *shakk* to withhold judgement, notably on the al-Ṣalt affair (i.e. the Nizwâ party). Finally comes a *wuqûf* list, which designates those about whom there was real question (*wuqûf su'âl*). From a doctrinal point of view, by far and away the most important of these is al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri. That neatly disposed of Jâbir b. Zayd's much better-known and far more influential contemporary, even though we know from Hûd's *Tafsîr* that much of what he said, or reputedly said, was actually absorbed by the Ibâḍis.

#### Ḥamalât al-'ilm

But to be consistent with the generally accepted Sunni criteria of a chain of transmission, 'Awtabi needs a second category, a specific Ibâḍi transmitter chain (*ḥamalât al-'ilm*) which gets as close as he can to origins, to the Companions of the Prophet via a *tâbi'i* whom they can claim as their own. That figure, of course, is Jâbir b. Zayd. The only other person in Basra who might have been seriously considered as a direct *sunna* source was Anas b. Mâlik. He is put in his place in the *K. Abi Sufyân*, by anecdotal material showing the respect in which Anas held Jâbir, 'today has died the most learned man on Earth'. The status of Anas, in any case, has been considerably elevated by the Sunnis, precisely because he was a late Companion and therefore a target for *ḥadīth* creation. Juynboll<sup>3</sup> has argued that the Companions did not generate *ḥadīth*, and that although (p.418) Anas was one of the last of the *âkhirîn*, he himself only seems to have originated two, and the common links claiming him as their origin appear in the following generation. Furthermore, the story that as a young man he entered the service of the Prophet is suspect and post-dated his death by at least fifty years. So Anas does not really enter the Ibâḍi picture until Abû Ya'qûb al-Warjilâni started manufacturing the Ibâḍi *ḥadīth* collection.

The accepted reliable Companion, well established before 'Awtabi's time, was Ibn 'Abbâs (d. 68/687 aged perhaps 70), the Ibâḍi *baḥr al-'ulûm*, and there is little question that Jâbir really did know him, as witness his correspondence, though whether as closely as the Ibâḍis make out is another matter. Ibn 'Abbâs is, of course, a major source for the Sunni collections with a high level of reliability by their norms, the third most prolific in Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad* (following Abû Hurayra and Madina's own particular 'Companion' 'Abdullâh b. 'Umar d. c. 74/693 aged 86). So if he was such an important source for *marfû' ḥadīth* in Muslim tradition then it is reasonable for the Ibâḍis to presume that Jâbir pumped him for the same information and passed it on to his pupil al-Rabî'. 'Awtabi is a bit confused about whether it was seventy at Badr he knew, for there is a tradition that none of those at Badr survived the first *fitna*, whereas some clearly did; indeed

---

the last two died in 60 and 61.<sup>4</sup> But to make sure, Jâbir's own contacts are reinforced by *ḥamal*ing the 'ilm direct from 'Â'isha (d. 57/677 aged 65) and 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭâb (better not quote his death-date!). The second point to observe is that *the* one source to transmit the 'ilm from Jâbir, according to 'Awtabi, is al-Rabî'. As shown in the previous chapter, this is not a slip. In one of 'Awtabi's transmission lists Abû 'Ubayda does not occur at all, in another he comes after al-Rabî'.

So how do we reconcile that with the fact that the Maghribi sources place Abû 'Ubayda as the great successor and with the evidence we have from al-Rabî' himself? As shown in Chapter 6, al-Rabî''s *Âthâr* were recorded by Abû Şufra, probably in the first third of the third century, apparently from an intermediary, Haytham. In the 1191/1777 manuscript of the *Dîwân al-Ma'rûḍ*, al-Rabî''s *Âthâr* make up the first thirty-two pages, the first thirteen to fourteen of which are al-Rabî' < Ḍumâm < Jâbir, though occasionally the intermediary is Abû Nûḥ or Abû Nûḥ and Ḍumâm. This obviously comprises the work that was known as *K. Ḍumâm*, coupled perhaps with vestiges of the *K. Abi Nûḥ* (a source quoted in the *K. al-Taqyîd*). Page 14 marks a change of style, with Abû Sufyân's views being quoted, followed by a bloc of 'I asked him'; but it is not clear who is asking whom, possibly Abû Sufyân asking al-Rabî'. On page 15 there is a brief return to the earlier format, but on page 16 the (p.419) *riwâya* from Ḍumâm almost stop and other sources appear. Here Abû 'Ubayda at last appears briefly as a link between al-Rabî' and Jâbir, and he also quotes Mujâhid (b. Jabr al-Makki, d. 104/722). The rest of the work is mainly other sources for Jâbir's material, among them al-Rabî' direct from Jâbir. Towards the end we shift into longer *isnâds*: Jumayyil al-Khwarzmi < al-Rabî' < Abû 'Ubayda < Jâbir < Ibn 'Abbâs; or Abû Ayyûb Wâ'il < al-Rabî' < Abû 'Ubayda < Jâbir < Ibn 'Abbâs (about *ghanîma*). Here, on page 21, for the first time the classical Ibâḍî lineage accepted in the Maghrib features. In other words, it is not until the final two sources, who would have been contemporaries of Abû Şufyân and Abû Sufra, that the relative position of al-Rabî' and Abû 'Ubayda as given by 'Awtabi is inverted, and an ascendancy higher than Jâbir appears. That at last conforms with the *K. Abi Sufyân* which laid down the sequence of the early Ibâḍîs for the Maghribis.

'Awtabi's *ḥamal* list, I would suggest, is in fact an attempt to apply to the Ibâḍî *âthâr* the Sunni criterion for the reliability of *ḥadîth*, that of a neat, short transmission, but with an Ibâḍî *isnâd*; al-Rabî' from Jâbir thence to a Companion (Ibn 'Abbâs). So al-Rabî' became his *mu'ammâr*, one of those wonderful centenarian giants of old who conveniently bridge awkward gaps or shorten transmission lines. But in the case of the Ibâḍîs it was not *ḥadîth* being transmitted, but the *âthâr*. The *âthâr* are the originality of what 'Awtabi now calls the Ibâḍî *madhhab*, seemingly the first time that Ibâḍism is really designated as such.<sup>5</sup> *Âthâr/ijmâ'* from the start had been the basis of what was now being presented as a 'school'. *Sunna*, as such, was not really an independent criterion, any more than were *ḥadîth*; they existed through a consensual assimilation into the *âthâr*. This possibly originally represented the approach of the proto-Sunnis too, Calder's 'communal *sunna*'. But the basis for that consensus had now developed its own rationale, conforming to that of the Shâfi'is, and Ibâḍism was moving on a converging course. So instead of assessing *ḥadîth* by the *isnâd* criterion, reliability for 'Awtabi lay in a teacher line, a chain of leading scholars transmitting and elaborating the 'ilm over the generations, reaching back from his Rustâq school predecessors, al-Bisyâni and Ibn Baraka, to al-Rabî', Jâbir b. Zayd,

Ibn 'Abbâs, and those they knew from the original Muslims, and thence the Prophet, the angel Gabriel, and God. 'Awtabi does not allow such unimportant matters as whether that chain is historically coherent to detract from his thesis; the general line is clear, *isnâd* critique was not a criterion for *ḥamalât al-'ilm*, any more than it was (overtly) for evaluating the *ḥadîth* that became incorporated into the *âthâr*.

**(p.420)** Recording in writing (*taqyîd*) what the *aṣḥâb* had said, on the other hand, had become significant, partly due to the loss of archives and books in the civil war. In the process such early sources as Sâlim b. Dhakwân had been rediscovered, while there are pointers in 'Awtabi's own writings, as too the *Bayân al-Shar'* and Ibn Waṣṣâf's commentary on Ibn al-Nazar's *Da'â'im*,<sup>6</sup> that part at least of the *K. Abi Sufyân* was in circulation among Omani scholars (the *terminus ad quem* is the *K. al-Taqyîd* manuscript of 625 AH). Abû Sufyan's supposed book, which had been so influential in developing the Maghribi account of Ibâḍi origins, had therefore also begun to influence the Omani account. But as 'Awtabi's work shows, the Maghribi and Omani models were by no means as yet congruent.

#### The opening of the gates of *ijtihâd* to non-Ibâḍi scholars

So another feature relevant to 'Awtabi's notions concerning *sunna* and *âthâr* is the fact that purely Ibâḍi *âthâr* were no longer the only point of reference. Ibn Baraka and Abû Saïd al-Kudami had opened the gates of Ibâḍi *ijtihâd*, albeit not using that term, to non-Ibâḍi Muslim scholars and as a result the '*ulamâ*' started quoting the Prophet with increasing frequency, but without explaining the source for his statements. The Maghrib likewise. The '*aqîda* of Abû Sahl Yaḥyâ b. Ibrâhîm al-Warjlâni (probably 6/12<sup>th</sup> century) quotes tradition going back not only to Ibn Abbâs, but also Anas b. Mâlik, Mujâhid, Bukhâri, and al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri, very rarely with *isnâds* and certainly no critique of authenticity. However, Cuperly notes,<sup>7</sup> he only really uses these sources to emphasize certain desirable qualities, never for determining dogma; for that, Ibâḍi authors alone are valid. That accords with Ibn Baraka's notion that the communal Sunna which had not already been absorbed into the *âthâr* could only be a guide for *faḍîla*, not *sam'*. Even so, the Ibâḍis were now absorbing Sunni material in to their *madhhab*, the term they now apply to their own school. Hitherto the terms they generally used was simply '*ilm*, *da'wa*, or *dîn*, generally *dîn al-Muslimîn* (= the true *dîn* of the Ibâḍis) or occasionally *dîn al-Ibâḍiyya*. But now, seemingly for the first time, 'Awtabi is treating it as an actual school, a *madhhab*; like the Sunnis.

Behind this evolution lies the fact that after the civil war the Omanis had been laid wide open to other doctrines. They always had been, to some extent, viz their concern with rebutting Qadariyya, Murji'a, **(p.421)** Mu'tazili, and Khâriji views, along with their own internal schisms.<sup>8</sup> In doing so, the Ibâḍis, perhaps unconsciously, had generally aligned themselves with what became considered as orthodox views, even with respect to the theory of the Imamate. So when, as a result of the civil war, they found themselves directly challenged by radical Shi'i activism, Qarmaṭi, Ismâ'îli, and extremist Twelver propaganda, they simply rejected these views as beyond the pale. They were essentially the doctrines of political rivals with dangerous social overtones that did not merit debate, and Qalhâti lays into them by attributing to them every perversion he could think of in his *Maqâma*. On the other hand, more moderate doctrines of Imâmi Shi'ism and residual Mu'tazili thought were still something of a challenge. There is

---

striking convergence between the Imâmiyya and Ibâdi views<sup>9</sup> in such matters as *taqiyya*, the *fâsiq*, the grave sinner whom the Zaydis also classify as *kâfir al-ni'ma*, as too the treatment of *ahl al-baghy* (for the Shi'a, those who fought against the twelve Imams). Their role-model is 'Ali's behaviour, an exemplar the Ibâdis avoid referring to by citing supposed earlier precedents concerning not taking *ghanîma* and *saby* from Muslims. The Mu'tazila were still particularly important in the Maghrib, but not without influence in the Mashriq, notably over human reasoning as an independent criterion, 'Awtabi's *bête noire* as his treatise on 'aql and *qiyâs* demonstrates. The Creation of the Qur'ân, which was fundamentally a Mu'tazili doctrine, also still remained a matter of debate for the Ibâdis. But the main challenge had now become Shâfi'i-Ash'arism.

So, I would suggest, 'Awtabi represented the end of a line in theological and legal thought that had been developing during the course of the 4/10<sup>th</sup> century, influenced notably by Ibn Baraka and al-Bisyâni, whose importance he recognizes in his *hamalat al-'ilm* list. That evolution saw an increasing convergence with the Shâfi'i principles his followers adumbrated during the same period. Thus, by 'Awtabi's time that Sunni school and its Ash'arite theological underpinnings represented the main regional challenge to the Ibâdis in Oman and more generally in southern Arabia and its associated maritime empire. By finding the common ground, the Ibâdis were then able to home in on those 'errors' that 'Awtabi says they and the Mâlikis were guilty of. What these were becomes clearer in the work of Qalhâti.

#### **(p.422) Qalhâti's Period**

Qalhâti's *Maqâma* begins with a dialogue between the *qawl al-fâsiq* and the *jawâb* of the Omani missionary who brought the Kilwans back into the fold. This is what he finds the renegades saying:

We are the progeny (*sulâla*) of Qâdi al-Walîd b. Sulaymân. I [the *fâsiq*] have left the *madhhab* of al-Walîd and adopted the new *madhhab*; I have deposed the *madhhab* of 'Abdullâh Ibn Ibâd and followed the *madhhab* of those who [permit] intercourse during menstruation and the period of childbirth, the *madhhab al-la'b wa'l-raqs wa'l-irtikâd* (play/gambling, dancing, running races). I believe in all the extremist sects such as the Şûfis, Jawâliqa, Dahriyya, and Zanâdiqa ... This new religion is named after Abû 'Aliyân and I have studied it two years. We relate that in his *imâma* there are two *qawls* in everything.

The *fâsiq* then goes on to say how it permits licentious behaviour, homosexuality, intercourse during forbidden times, et cetera, et cetera. As already noted, this is no more than attributing all that is abhorrent to such extremists. Much more to the point is the continuous reiteration of the term *madhhab*. So, also incorporated into the Kilwa manuscript is part of the work modelled on the *K. al-Firdaws*, of Qalhâti's contemporary 'Abd al-Sallâm b. Sa'id, entitled *tawhîd wa tafsîruhu 'alâ madhhab al-Muslimîn*.

This emphasis on *madhhab* is not coincidental. It is fundamental. The real challenge doctrinally to the Ibâdis was Sunnism. In the Maghrib it was essentially the Mâlikis,<sup>10</sup> but in Oman it was the other schools. Thus we find Abû Saîd al-Ḥasan b. 'Abdullâh al-Sîrâfi (who also studied with Ibn Durayd) crossed over to Oman to study Ḥanafî law there.<sup>11</sup> Muqaddasi<sup>12</sup> reports that there

were Da'ûdiyya in Oman and for him they are one of the four main schools. Taking their name from the Imam of the Zâhiriyya, Dâwûd b. Khalaf al-Işfahâni (c. 200–270/884),<sup>13</sup> they were indeed of importance at that time. Dâwud had studied *ḥadîth* under well-known authorities in Basra, Baghdad, and Nishapur before settling in Baghdad and took Shâfi'i doctrines to extremes. Relying exclusively on the Qur'ân and *ḥadîth*, he not only rejected personal reasoning (*ra'y*) as Shâfi'i had done, but also *qiyâs* and adhered to the literal (*zâhir*) meaning of the Qur'ân and *ḥadîth*. Nevertheless, the real challenge regionally to the Ibâḍis came from the Shâfi'i school itself.

Over the centuries Sunnism was to become accepted as a more or less a neutral form of Islam by the Ibâḍis, but in the period we are dealing with (**p.423**) it represented a positive challenge. Northern Oman, finally alienated by the intransigence of the Rustâq school, signalled their breach by adopting Shâfi'i Sunnism: in Kilwa it eventually it won out, as too in the Yemen-Hadramawt. This is evident from the start of Qalhâti's *Maqâma*, as its commentary shows. That was written by Râshid b. 'Umar b. Aḥmad of Su'âl Nizwâ, responding to a request by the Omanis to explain Qalhâti's work. That, he says, would be too great a task, incorporating the whole Ibâḍi *milla* (note the term), and also the split between the Rustâq and Nizwâ schools. Instead, he would explain the context of its writing, in so far as he could reconstruct it, along with the meaning of some of the phrases which Qalhâti puts into the mouth of the *fâsiq*. This Râshid b. 'Umar was a direct descendant of Ibn al-Nazar, and related to the family of one of Qalhâti's contemporaries, and it was through these connections that he wrote the commentary. The fact that in referring to the Rustâq-Nizwâ parties dispute he mentions that one of the famous lines descending from the teacher of the author of the *Muṣannaf*, whose death-dates are recorded over some nine generations, was above them shows that Râshid was two or three generations on from Qalhâti, and writing getting on for 100 years later. This is also further evidence that Ibâḍism was very much alive in central Oman in the fourteenth century.

His commentary, which I have only skimmed through on the one occasion I had access to the manuscripts, throws a quite different light on what Qalhâti was driving at. It was not the extreme Shi'is but the Shâfi'is. Thus the phrase the *madhhab al-la'b* is nothing to do with the decadent frivolity and gambling of Abû 'Aliyân's followers, but a jibe that the Shâfi'is permitted the playing of chess (*shaṭranj*) in the vicinity of the mosque and sūq, a grave sin in their eyes;<sup>14</sup> similarly, the *imâma* which has two *qawls* in answer to everything is simply a poke at the fact that they produce conflicting dicta.

The *Maqâma* is thus a verse exercise to display the kind of information which Qalhâti dealt with in his major work, the two-volume *K. al-Kashf wa'l-bayân*. It is the second volume that European scholars are familiar with, through the manuscript copy (1104/1692) in the British Library (Or 2606). This treats the seventy-three *firqas* along the line of the standard *al-milal wa'l-niḥal* books (cf. al-Baghdâdi, d. 429/1037, and Shahrastâni famous work, written in 521/1127–8), and is superficially of little interest, except for its treatment of the early Khawârij, based on standard sources like the *K. al-Nahrawân*, which were also available to the classical writers,<sup>15</sup> and a brief *exposé* of the true *madhhab* with which the work (**p.424**) ends, along with 'Awtabi's *ḥamalat al-'ilm* list. It is, incidentally, probably the source for chapters 28 and 29 of the *Kashf al-Ghumma*. From the point of view of Ibâḍism itself, the real interest lies in the first volume, which I saw in

---



the Maktabat al-Ghannâ in Beni Isguen (Mzab). As its fully expanded title shows, it is an *exposé* of the Ibâdi credo, a polemic which proceeds through refutation: *fî tawhîd al-bayân wa tafsîr al-mushâkil al-Qur'ân wa'l-radd 'âl'lâ'l-mushabbih, wa'l-qadariyya wa'l-mu'tazila wa'l-qâyilîn; nuhâlifuhu bi'l-ḥujja wa'l-burhân min kitâb wa'l-kashf wa'l-bayân.*

#### The Maghrib: the *ḥalqa*<sup>16</sup>

In other words, Qalhâti is taking on the other sects frontally, on their own terms and criteria. It is no coincidence that it bears a certain affinity with the definitive Maghribi work concerning Ibâdi dogma and its relations with other schools and theologies, the *K. al-Dalîl wa'l-Burhân* of Abû Ya'qûb Yûsuf b. Ibrâhîm al-Sadarâti/Warjilâni, who died in 570/1174-5. Whether the two met is impossible to say, but we do know that Abû Ya'qûb made the Pilgrimage and it was a period when there was a considerable exchange of books between the Omanis and the North Africans. Abû'l-'Abbâs Aḥmad b. Abi 'Abdullâh Muḥammad b. Bakr al-Nafûsi (d. 501/1111, see below) states that when he studied the '*Dîwân*' of the Nafûsa he found it contained some 33,000 sections from books that came from the Mashriq.

In the Maghrib there had been no revival of the Imamate after the Rustamids, and the approach to survival as their communities dispersed was the institution of the *ḥalqa*. This is surely in part calqued on the loose organization of the '*ulamâ*' in Basra, the *jamâ'at al-Muslimîn*, but it also takes many of its peculiarities from the special conditions pertaining in the Maghrib and which, as Grossmann (1976) emphasizes, was built on the '*urf*' that regulated their religious, social, and political relationships. Essentially it was an ascetic religious community, concerned with maintaining high moral standards, to the point that in certain communities the '*azzâba*' were discouraged from marrying and were distinguished also by their dress and even tonsure. To understand certain aspects of the institution one might be better off looking at St Augustine than Islamic theology (as too in certain customs of *ḥubûs/waqf*). The practices in the (p.425) Tunisian Jerid, which may show certain Nukkarite tendencies, seem to be the earliest information we have about such an organization, but the first codification was that of Abû 'Abdullâh Muḥammad b. Bakr al-Nafûsi (d. 440/1048-9), who set up the institution in Wargla. He was the leading religious figure in the Wadi Righ area, where the main Ibâdi centre at Sadrâta, 8 km from Warjilân (Wargla/Ouargla), was founded in 296/909 by the last Rustamid Imam who fled there after the destruction of Tahert. But it was on a major caravan route, and exposed to disorders, so that Abû 'Abdullâh spent a year in the Wadi Mya at Ifren where he came into contact with the neighbouring tribes of the so-called B. Muṣ'ab (Mzab/Mîzâb), whom he started converting from Mu'tazilism. As a result he prepared the way for a more remote refuge, well before the Hilâli invasion. The first Ibâdi settlement in the Mzab was founded al-Ateuf (al-'Aṭaf) in 402/1011-12, near the *ksûr* created by elements of the nomadic Cheurfa (Shurafâ') after they had been driven out of Fez.

The appearance of the terrible Bani Hilâl and their destruction of Sadrâta in 443/1051 hastened the exodus, so that Ibâdis from Wargla, W. Righ, Nafûsa, and Jerba founded three other settlements (Bou Noura, Beni Isguen, and the original Melika), and possibly even the fifth, Ghardaia, between 437 (or 440) and 445/1053. It is interesting to note that Abû Ya'qûb al-Warjilâni actually makes a specific category of *fitna* in the case of the Bani Hilâl when discussing resistance to the *a'râb* (Arabs, nomads?). It is also worth noting, in connection with the founding

---

of such new settlements, that Ibâḍi tradition considered that a mosque may be built and an 'azzâba created anywhere forty families gather to settle. This in fact goes back to the model of Abû Bilâl and the idea that a *khurûj* requires a minimum of forty *shurât*. So Bâba al-Jamma (Ti Gamma) set off to found what became the largest settlement, Ghardaia, when he had enrolled forty Ibâḍi followers around 477 (variant 445), and similarly it was a group of forty Walad Bakhâ who formed the core of the much later settlement of Guerarra. We find a similar manifestation in the mid-nineteenth century in Oman, with the curious incident of a group of forty Yâl Sa'd on the Batina swearing to *shirâ'* and attacking the Âl Bû Sa'id' governor of Suwayq.<sup>17</sup>

While at Ateuf, Abû 'Abdullâh also drew up the regulation of the *irwân*, a Berber term used solely in the Mzab for the degree below the 'azzâba. And it was his son, Abû'l-Abbâs Aḥmad (d. 501/1111), who wrote the *Uṣûl al-Araḍîn* which regulated urban form, as well as the remarkable irrigation system based on the occasional flash floods of the Shabka, so that the five settlements cultivate some 1,000 ha of palms (p.426) through ingenious systems of ground-water storage and distribution.<sup>18</sup> In due course both the parallel institutions of the *ḥalqa* and the qualification of the 'azzâba were developed. One of the main elaborations was that of Abû Ya'qûb al-Warjlâni's friend, Abû 'Ammâr 'Abd al-Kâfi al-Warjlâni (first half of 6/12<sup>th</sup> century), in his *Sîrat al-ḥalqa*, and eventually the term 'azzâba, which originally was the equivalent of 'ulamâ', came more or less to replace that of *ḥalqa*. Similarly, Ammi Sa'id, who had come in 854/1450 from Jerba with two others to settle disputes and organize teaching in the Mzab, made the original *irwân* code the basis of his education system, in which the *irû* learnt the Qur'ân by heart and passed the examination in a continuous all-night recitation, before proceeding to higher studies. Under his guidance a sort of superior council of all the 'azzâba was developed.

Abû 'Abdullâh's original regulation was a fairly small work which really shows the 'azzâba as something of a monastic teaching order made up of two classes, those who command ('*âmir*) and those who obey (*ma'mûr*). The highest authority was the *shaykh* who supervised the purchases, sales, and stocking of supplies and goods from the *awqâf* and adjudged (*ḥakm*) in disputes and delegated specific carefully defined duties to the '*arîf*.<sup>19</sup> This teaching-learning role is emphasized in Darjîni's biography of Abû 'Abdullâh (ii. 380), where the term 'azzâba *talâmidha* is used. It cannot be emphasized too much that Arabic was the language of scholarship and was completely unintelligible to the Berber communities, *a fortiori* after the cosmopolitan centre of Tahert fell and the Ibâḍis scattered to the small oases in the south. Those who could master it were few, and the very root 'zb has a connotation of someone apart; furthermore, it seems that at one period at least they met not in the mosque, as might be expected, but in cemeteries. In other words, the 'azzâba were the *khâṣṣ*, but they almost formed a class, separated from the '*âmm* not just by their '*ilm* but by mastery of a totally different language and a foreign culture. It also served as a secret language, allowing them to converse or discuss when others around were regarded with suspicion; the Mzab, it should be remembered was never entirely Ibâḍi and today Bani Isguen is the only settlement which is so. But such knowledge was only for the few, the very few. Comparing Arabic and Berber to, say, Latin and French completely understates the differences: western theological scholars might find battling with Hebrew makes a better comparison. In this connection it is interesting to note that the reason why al-Darjîni wrote his *Ṭabaqât al-Mashâ'ikh bi'l-Maghrib*, according to (p.427) al-

---

Barrâdi, was because the standard work until then had been the *K. al-Sîra wa akhbâr al-â imma* of Abû Zakariyyâ' written around the turn of the 5/6<sup>th</sup> century. Darjîni, who had studied the *ḥalqa* in Wargla before settling in Jerba was asked by its 'azzâba to write a work on the Imams and Doctors of the Maghrib, which an emissary from Oman had requested. As Abû Zakariyyâ's work was considered incomplete and not very scholarly because of his imperfect knowledge of Arabic, Darjîni acceded (the book probably dates to the mid-7/13<sup>th</sup> century and it also includes the *Sîrat al-ḥalqa*).

In Abû 'Abdullâh's time the 'azzâba and *irwân* institutions had essentially been geared to furthering 'ilm, but faced with the practical problems arising from the formation of the Pentapolis, the institution became a sort of higher council which met in a circle (*ḥalqa*), making decisions affecting the community as a whole. Deliberations were in Berber but were recorded in Arabic. The first of these *tifâqât* recorded dates to 807/1405 (?), and Sh. Aṭfayyish, according to Ben Moussa, states that he had counted 1,872 up to 1324/1904. Religious learning remains the heart of the *ḥalqa* institution, with three levels, I was told: the *ṭolba*, the *irwân*, and the 'azzâba, that is, the students, those who have passed the first great level of examination (the Qur'ân by rote) and those who have fully qualified. The core institution is made up of the leading 'azzâba with experience in administration and such practical matters as irrigation and the *sûq*. The council of from twelve to sixteen traditionally ran the mosque, prayer, *waqf*, schools, rites, and succession for the dead, conducted external relations, and so on, and it also had at its service a sort of moral police, the *imaṣṣorda*. But it also consulted in a wider body, the *jamâ'a*, which included lay members of the community. Most of the 'azzâba were engaged in earning a living, but this was confined to local crafts and agriculture (*filâḥa*), so that they were readily available. But the Ibâḍis had always been in commerce (*tujjâra*) and the demographic pressure on the resource base of the Mzab was such that, as in the Hadramawt and Oman, external trade was essential to survival. So consultation was required at all levels to deal with regulating the needs of the society at home and to keep those temporarily migrating for work or trade on the straight and narrow, all the more so since most of the commercial intermediaries were outsiders, notably the Arab Chaamba of Metlili, Wargla, and Goléa, and also the Zoua of Insalah.

Demographic pressure and local quarrels also led to founding new settlements. A major collective decision was necessary for Ghardaia and the *jamâ'a* decided not to allow any further settlement upstream. So Berriane (1090/1679) was founded by two sections from Ghardaia, and Guerarra (1039/1630) by the Walad Bakhâ of Ghardaia, in association with a group of Mâlîki Chereufa, both outside the Pentapolis. (p.428) Noteworthy, too, is the fact that the two parties developing Guerrara mutually agreed never to try and convert the other.<sup>20</sup>

### Comparison with Oman

It is interesting to compare this consultation process with that in Oman. The Mozabite community *siyar* were essentially based on the notion of a universal *ijmâ'*. Although the 'azzâba considered themselves *mujtahids*, they justified associating laic members in the deliberations of the *jamâ'a* in the interest of reaching a consensus between the religious and temporal leaders of the community.<sup>21</sup> In Oman, as I have tried to show in my *Imamate Tradition*, this result was achieved through the wide network of 'ulamâ', who had generally studied with one or two of the main religious leaders, but who lived dispersed through the main centres, or were associated

---

with major tribal groupings. In Oman the emphasis was on supporting the Imamate order or in re-establishing it. Such '*ulamâ*' not only also served as walis and qadis, even when the Imamate was in abeyance, but also had a workaday life, administrating *waqf* (an important source of revenue for them) and settling village and tribal disputes. They were not remote from their congregation. It was through consultation of this '*ulamâ*' class that the Imam was chosen, and it was through them that tribal and factional interests were known and represented. The essential quality in an Imam and his administration was not simply '*ilm*', but *başîra*, the quality the Abû 'Abdullâh had insisted, right back in the time of the First Imamate, was also a *fariða*. The Imamate tradition was geared to the level of the Islamic state. In contrast, that of the *ḥalqa* was developed around small communities in which mutual consultation was a necessity and in which there was no clearly established political precedence.

Similar differences emerged in the notion of *walâya* and *barâ'a*. Abû Ya 'qûb al-Warjlâni emphasizes the spiritual dimension, and considers there are three aspects of *walâya*, agreement on the *sharî'a*, mutual love, and the resulting worthy life. The emphasis in 'Awtabi and Qalhâti is on '*ilm*', the *walâya* accorded the leading Doctors and Imams of the true religion and its related dogma. In the same way, *barâ'a* is essentially about rejecting those who have led the Ibâdî community astray, who have deposed the just Imams. In the Mzab it often takes the form of *tabriyya*, a punishment of temporary banishment or even full expulsion by the *jamâ'a* for **(p. 429)** those who have transgressed the code of the community; even today those who have offended are ostracized, by not buying, dealing, or talking to them.

#### The closed community: *zuhûr* and *kitmân*

In many ways the approach developed in the Maghrib after the collapse of the Imamate was that of the closed community concerned with preserving standards in order to survive. It was essentially introspective and defensive. They were in *kitmân*, as Shammâkhi (d. 928/1522) tells the Omanis. This term was, of course, not new, but it was developed considerably by Abû Ya 'qûb in his *Dalîl*, as Ben Moussa points out, and it is really now that it becomes a fourth state. And it is significant that for treating *kitmân* the *Muṣannaf* (x. §15) relies mainly on a Maghribi source, Abû 'Ubayda (Nâfi' b. Naşr) al-Maghribi. *Zuhûr* was a condition, the community living openly. But for the North Africans, *zuhûr* is contrasted with *kitmân*, and just as the classification of the two types of Imam (*difâ'i* or *shâri*) was largely a relatively late rationalization, so was the contrast of the two conditions. As Abû 'Abdullâh (Muḥammad b. Maḥbûb) replied when asked, 'When is *zuhûr*?', the truth simply grows on the people and it begins to emerge. Some succeed with forty, others 10,000. In the same way, the Imam emerges. There is no original theory about the Imam and the early Basran Ibâdîs can be scanned in vain for anything on the subject, beyond the pronouncements following the Nukkarite dispute and the general notion that he should '*amr bi'l-ma'rûf*' and that his selection was not confined to Quraysh. All the emphasis was on establishing what the *ma'rûf* was. Virtually everything that is written about the Imamate in Oman results from case history and disputes. So, as the state declines or struggles to reassert itself, the role of the *ḍa'îf*, *pis aller* unqualified 'weak' Imam features; and when there is no Imam at all the community tends to turn to a leading '*âlim*' to adjudicate. So we read of Muḥammad b. Sulaymân al-Bahlawi being appointed to the *ḥukm bayn al-nâs* in the disordered conditions of the fifteenth century, while in Tahert the population placed *ḥâkims* at the head of

---

their groups after the fall of the Rustamid Imam ate. But there was no real theory about their role, and the nearest we get to it in Oman is the idea of the *muhtasib*.

So while it is possible that at Qalhât in Ibn Baṭṭuta's time the Ibâḍis could not go about openly professing their religious beliefs, we must ask ourselves what did that really mean? So long as one behaved as a good Muslim, conformed to the rules of *taqiyya* and the degree of cooperation and latitude permitted in dealing with the *jabâbira* (which included praying in their mosques), one was still a good Ibâḍi. Such relations depended on where you were living, but there was never a persecution of Ibâḍis as such in Oman. As al-Sâlimi states *apropos* Ibn Baṭṭûta: 'it is true that **(p.430)** outsiders have occasionally gained control of parts of the country and made their *madhhabs* dominant, but we know of no time in Oman when the Ibâḍis could not practice (*iẓhâr*) their *madhhab* there.'<sup>22</sup> So *zuhûr* was a relative term.

In fact, Abû Ya'qûb was not really describing the condition in the Maghrib when he contrasted *zuhûr* with *kitmân*, for the Ibâḍis continued to live quietly in an open state of professing their faith in certain regions. What he was really trying to do was rationalize and periodize the state of the Imamate, which was never restored anywhere except in Oman. So for the Maghribis *zuhûr* was first exemplified by Abû Bakr and 'Umar, *difa'* by 'Abdullâh b. Wahb al-Râsibi, *shirâ'* by Abû Bilâl, and *kitmân* by Jâbir b. Zayd and Abû 'Ubayda.<sup>23</sup> It was this notion of four states that became the model for Ibâḍi history and gradually took hold in Oman also, resulting in unfortunate misconceptions about the structure of the original Ibâḍi community in Basra. The original Ibâḍis in fact formed a sort of *ḥalqa*, a community itself made up of various *majlises*, which discussed, argued, and finally agreed. It may have recognized the pre-eminence of certain members in *fiqh*, theology, or indeed in organizing *shirâ'* (notably Ḥâjib and al-Rabî'), and discussion may have taken a 'Collegiate' form with a sort of president, but none was ever an *imâm* (at least in other than prayer), and the idea that there was a secret Imam in *kitmân* distorts the essential quality of the school, the consensual view that forms the essential characteristic both of *walâya* and the *âthâr* of the community. So even when the Imamate was established, the Imam was never more than a first amongst equals, subject to correction in matters of interpretation of '*ilm*.

### Closed and Open Scholarship: Abû Ya'qûb Yûsuf Al-warjlâni

This closed community characteristic that developed in the Maghrib was reflected also in the approach to scholarship. To preserve the purity of their legacy, the *irwân* were forbidden by the '*azzâba* to read anything other than Ibâḍi authors. Anyone who looked outside was frowned upon (*karah*), which is why the distinguished 6/12<sup>th</sup>-century scholar Ibn Kha-lfûn (Abû Ya'qûb Yûsuf b. Khal-fûn al-Mazâti), author of the famous *Ajwibat Ibn Khal-fûn*, was excommunicated for reading works like the *K. al-Ishrâf 'alâ Masâ'il al-Khilâf*, the very work which in Oman Abû Sa'id **(p.431)** al-Kudami had written a critique of a century-and-a-half before.<sup>24</sup> And as we shall see, it is this selfsame Ibn Khal-fûn who first refers to the *Âthâr* of al-Rabî', albeit designating the work as *K. Abi Şufra ('an al-Rabî' 'an Jâbir b. Zayd)*.

The alternative approach was that of Abû Ya'qûb, like Qalhâti in Oman: put one's own house in order and then join battle with the opposition. Abû Ya'qûb, Darjîni emphasizes, was widely read in the whole gamut of jurisprudence and theology, including an expertise in *ḥadith* and *akhbâr*.

---

He had also travelled extensively and studied at Cordoba, so was used to discoursing with others. His Qur'ânic commentaries demonstrate his ability in *tafsîr*, while his *K. al- 'Adl wa'l-inṣâf* was a major work of jurisprudence, that Shammâkhi summarized in a *Mukhtaṣar*. His great work (also much quoted by Shammâkhi), the *Dalîl wa'l-Burhân*, is essentially concerned with the wider aspects of theological debate. It too largely treats of the four great problems of Islamic theology identified by Shahrastâni; *tawḥîd wa'l-'adl* (i.e. the disputes that arose from debating God's unique nature and the concept of his justice), *wa' d wa'l-wa 'îd* (God's reward and punishment), *al-sam' wa'l- 'aql* (revealed law and human interpretation), but unlike earlier debates Abû Ya' qûb is particularly concerned to counter Ash'arite and Sunni views, as well as treating the problems debated by the Ibâḍis themselves. Abû Ya' qûb was not an isolated figure; rather, perhaps, the outcome of the wide interest in theological problems that was characteristic of his age. As we saw in Chapter 6 when discussing the *K. Abi Sufyân*, this 'revival' seems to have developed among the Nafûsan North African Ibâḍis in the wake of Abû 'Abdullâh Muḥammad b. Bakr, the man responsible for codifying the *ḥalqa* and *irwâ n*. One of his pupils, Abû l-Rabî' Sulaymân b. Yakhlaf (d. 471/1079, i.e. just 100 years before Abû Ya' qûb), instituted a *ḥalqa* in the Jabal Nafûsa that was particularly influential, and his own pupils included Abû 'Abdullâh's own son, Abû'l-Abbâs Aḥmad. It was now that theological works really blossomed, including two by Abû'l-Rabî' himself. Amongst those prominent in the Wargla-Wadi Righ area was the highly regarded Abû 'Ammâr 'Abd al-Kâfi, with whom the younger Abû Ya' qûb made the Pilgrimage. He too was a polymath but with a specialization in *kalâm*; his *K. al-Mujîz* is largely concerned with refuting heresies.

It was also the period when the '*aqîda* becomes characteristic, a sort of profession of faith which is not really found in Oman until relatively modern times. Documents attesting theological views had, of course, existed from the start, and it is difficult to define exactly what may be termed an '*aqîda*; but its essential characteristic seems to be a holistic approach to expressing the faith. Since the genre is essentially Maghribi (**p.432**) and only really develops from the end of our period, it is not intended to discuss it further here, particularly as Cuperly (1984) has dealt with and analysed the most important examples in his masterly work on the subject.

#### *Ibâḍi ḥadîth*

But from the point of view of directly confronting the Sunni schools one piece was missing from Abû Ya' qûb's armoury: there were no Ibâḍi *ḥadîth*, for those that existed had been absorbed by general consensus in the *âthâr*. If, therefore, like was to be answered by like in theological-judicial debate with the Sunni schools, then it was necessary to align those *âthâr* with the criteria used for *ḥadîth* analysis in the great Sunni collections. In any case, since the Ibâḍis were now using *ḥadîth* they might as well have their own collection. Arranging all these *âthâr* and rationalizing *fatâwa* whose *matn* differed little, if at all, from standard Sunni *fiqh*, would have been of little difficulty for a scholar of Abû Ya' qûb's broad knowledge. On the other hand, the *sine qua non* was that it should not appear to be derivative from the Sunni collections, but from the teacher line that had by now been established, with the concentration on al-Rabî' and Abû 'Ubayda, and through them Jâbir b. Zayd and so back to Ibn 'Abbâs and his network, plus any other sources they might have tapped. That is the process, I believe which led Abû Ya' qûb to 'arrange' (*tartîb*) al-Rabî's work as part of a *ḥadîth* collection.

---

So what were his sources apart from the Sunni ones? There seem to be three blocs of al-Rabî' material, the *âthâr*, his *futyâ*, and what was recorded by his students in the *Mudawwana*. In addition, there is the mysterious *Dîwân* of Jâbir b. Zayd, supposedly recorded by himself and a copy of which was said once to have existed in Hârûn al-Rashîd's library. The North African sources conveniently claim that a copy was passed down to Abû 'Ubayda, thence to al-Rabî', then to Abû Sufyân, and finally to his son Abû 'Abdullâh. From this a further copy is said to have been brought to the Maghrib by the Nafûsan Naffâth b. Abi Yûnis, who destroyed it when in rebellion against the Rustamids, but there is an implication his brother, who had been Aflâh's governor of Qantrâra, had copied it. Needless to say, there is absolutely no trace of such a story in Oman or in anything Abû 'Abdullâh ever wrote, and it is another example of how material apparently essential for developing the *madhhab*, but unknown in Oman, supposedly found itself preserved in the Maghrib. On the other hand, we have already seen (in Chapter 6) that collections of Jâbir's opinions were set down by some of his pupils or transmitted from them, even though, as was traditional in his age, Jâbir disliked having his judgements recorded in writing.

**(p.433)** Al-Rabî' collected *Âthâr* and *Fatâwa*, like that of his students recorded in the *Mudawwana*, was another assemblage also uniquely preserved in the Maghrib. The *Âthâr* first surfaced in the work of Ibn Khalfûn, who quotes important sections of what he calls the *K. Abi Şufra* in a form identical with the manuscripts of the *Âthâr*. Kharusi (2003) considers the *Fatâwa* as a quite separate work, and it is true that the former concentrate on Jâbir and the latter on al-Rabî's own opinions, but I find they merge rather more than he states. And if Abû Şufra was not the source for the *Fatâwa*, who was? Abû Ghânim? However, it does not matter much, since neither is a *ḥadîth* collection. We also learn from Darjîni and Shammâkhi that Abû Muḥammad 'Abdullâh b. Muḥammad al-Lawâti (432–528/1134), concerned with spreading understanding of the basic Arab works to the Berber-speaking population, used the text of al-Rabî' b. Ḥabîb's *Âthâr* in one particular session.<sup>25</sup> Shammâkhi significantly also tells us that Abû Şufra related al-Rabî's *Âthâr* from Ḍumâm from Jâbir, but says he does not know who related the *K. Musnad 'an Abû 'Ubayda*, called *K. al-Rabî'*, but quite possibly Abû Şufra also. Darjîni also mentions the *Musnad*, but his statement does not derive from the *K. Abi Sufyân* which is his main source for al-Rabî's biography. Al-Barrâdi simply states there is a book called *Ḥadîth al-Rabî'*, but says that this is not the same as Abû Ya'qûb's arrangement; a tantalizing piece of information that poses more questions than it answers. I suspect, if true, it was an early first essay. All these references by these late Maghribi authors do is confirm what we know, that the *Âthâr* are different from the *Musnad*.

So neither the *Âthâr* nor the *Fatâwa* are *ḥadîth*, nor in any way resemble them, anymore than the opinions in Jâbir's correspondence. They are *ra'y*, judicial opinions, still very much on the early *lâ bâs* lines, or of indicating what the right Islamic practice was, which generally characterized all early *fiqh*, whether Ibâḍi or other. Abû Ya'qûb would also have had access to the other material from Jâbir, possibly his correspondence and that found in various version of the *Dîwân al-Ma'rûḍ*. In addition to the material discussed in Chapter 6 (the *Aqwâl Qatâda*), Ennami mentions Abû 'Ubayda's *zakât* treatise, and two works by his heretic pupils, 'Abdullâh b. 'Abd al-'Azîz relating from Abû Nûḥ and Abû 'Ubayda on marriage and divorce, and Abû al-Muarrij

---

relating from Abû Ubayda on fasting. From Kharusi's study of the Egyptian manuscript (Dâr al-Kutub B/21582), entitled *Mudawwanat Abi Ghânim al-Khurâsânî*, which also includes the *Âthâr* of al-Rabî', it is fairly clear that part at least of the material derives from the supposed author of the *Mudawwana*. Unfortunately, I (like Kharusi) have only seen the Rabî' section of the (p.434) 1191/1777 manuscript Ennami used,<sup>26</sup> but the fact that at the end of other treatises which are found both in the Egyptian copy and the *Dîwân al-Marûd* (including material from authorities of Basra, Kûfa, Madina, and Mecca) comes a statement that it is 'of the opinion of the Kûfans shown to Ibâdi scholars' lends strength to my view that part at least of the *Dîwân al-Ma rûd* could be a Nukkarite work, the Kûfans being essentially the followers of 'Abdullâh b. Yazîd al-Fazâri, to whom some attribute authorship of the *Mudawwana* (cf. Chapter 12).

However that may be, we can assume that all these sources were available to Abû Ya'qûb, along with much other material extant in his time. Amongst works specifically mentioned is the *K. Abi Sufyân*,<sup>27</sup> which means he probably had a great deal more than what we now only know from citations in much later sources. From the point of view of creating *hadîth*, the essential element apparently revealed by that work is that Abû 'Ubayda was Jâbir's successor as leader of the Ibâdis. True, Ibn Sallâm is a little more nuanced, saying he is the most important *faqîh* after Jâbir from whom he transmitted. Yet the *Âthâr* show that al-Rabî' was transmitting from Jâbir via ʾDumâm. That must have been awkward for Abû Ya'qûb, who certainly knew of the so-called *K. Dumâm*. True, Abû 'Ubayda was earlier than his pupil al-Rabî', but ʾDumâm was a complication who did not fit into the neat order required. So to keep the *sanad* short and avoid complications, Abû 'Ubayda becomes the main transmitter and only three transmissions in Abû Ya'qûb's 'arrangement' or 're-presentation' originate from ʾDumâm.<sup>28</sup> Moving further up towards origins: since it was well established that Jâbir knew Ibn 'Abbâs, it stands to reason that he would have milked this Qur'ânic expert. (Even though he was only 10 to 15 years old when the Prophet died, he is accepted as a commentator, although there is some dispute over exactly how many actual *hadith* he directly transmitted.) So it is logical to presume that the *matn* recorded in the Sunni collections must also have been available to the Ibâdis. Hence, according apparently to al-Rabî' himself when summarizing at the end of Part II of the *Musnad*, there are 150 Ibn 'Abbâs traditions back to the Prophet (= *marfû'*, though he does not use the term), plus another 184 *marâsîl* (which he does), virtually all with the *sanad* Abû 'Ubayda ‹ Jâbir. Al-Rabî' also kindly reminds his readers that Ibn 'Abbâs died in 68, in Mâlik b. Marwân's time, aged 72, which puts him at the high end of his supposed age range. In addition to his (p.435) transmissions which form the basis of the *hadîth* collection, there are Abû 'Ubayda's own eighty-eight *marâsîl*. It is interesting to observe this use of the technical term *marâsîl* by a man who died in the 170s, a quarter-of-a-century and more before the birth of Bukhâri in 194 and Muslim a decade later still! *A fortiori* since also attributed to al-Rabî' is a statement that 'we learn' (*balaghanâ*; from whom?) that there are 4,000 *hadîth*, 600 in *uṣûl*, the rest in *adâb* and *akhbâr*, transmitted from 900 men and one woman, 'Â'isha. Curious that none of the great standard collections are aware of al-Rabî' as a *hadîth* source.

But to continue with the probable underlying logic of Abû Ya'qûb's arrangement. Since Anas b. Mâlik was a Companion and contemporary of Jâbir in Basra, there is no problem in lifting another forty *marfû'* traditions from him. Since 'Â'isha was a confidant of both Ibn 'Abbâs and



Jâbir another sixty-eight can safely be taken from her. Abû Hurayra was so prolific (nearly 4,000 *ḥadīth*) that there is no problem in adding a bloc of seventy-two from him. Abû Sa'îd al-Khudri (d. 74) is nice and late so no problem about him either, but the prolific 'Abdullâh b. 'Urnar, who was Madinan, must be avoided, and of course Abû Ya'qub would never fall for the sort of careless anachronisms that made 'Awtabi imagine that Jâbir could have recorded from the Caliph 'Umar! So we have, again apparently according to al-Rabî', 654 *ḥadīth* in these two first parts (in fact 742). Add, in the next sections, the transmissions that al-Rabî' himself collected from others, including a neat set of supposedly Khâriji traditions about the Imamate, throw in a few more from post-al-Rabî' sources, notably Abû Sufyân, plus a *ziyâda* from the Imam Aflâḥ who recorded them from Abû Ghânim and bingo: 1005 *ḥadīth*. The *Jâmi' al-Ṣaḥīḥ* of the Ibâḍis.

This collection is in fact redundant, an irrelevancy, and has served the Ibâḍis poorly. Looking through the footnotes of a recent edition<sup>29</sup> which shows where the parallel material is found in the standard sources, it is all there, all, with a certain predilection for Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad*. It is, frankly, a fake. The Ibâḍis did not operate by *ḥadīth*, nor did they do so post-Abû Ya'qub until the *nahḍa*. It first attracted attention, once again in the Maghrib, in the *Ḥawâshi al-tartīb* by Abû Sa'îd al-Qaṣabi (d. 1088/1677), which was re-presented in a *Mukhtaṣar* by 'Abd al-'Azîz al-Thamîni (1130-1223/1718-1808), the leading pupil of 'Ammi Yaḥyâ (d. 1226/1811), known as *Abû'l-nahḍa*. He incorporated it in the 'bible' of the renaissance in the Maghrib, the *K. al-Nîl*, which in turn was re-expanded in a huge commentary by Muḥammad b. Yûsuf Aṭṭayyish (1236-1332/1820-1914), who sent his young contemporary, 'Abdullâh b. Ḥumayd al-Sâlimi (1868-1914), a copy of the Maghribi manuscript, (p.436) which he compared with those available in Oman (all deriving from a copy that probably arrived in the late Ya'âruba period<sup>30</sup>). This al-Sâlimi edited with an extensive *Sharḥ*, while his Maghribi opposite number added a *Tartīb* of the *Tartīb*, as well as a major commentary on the *Mudawwana*.

All of which served the *nahḍa*, a *retour aux sources* that characterized the *salafiyya* movements of the period and with which the Ibâḍis attempted a limited *rapprochement*. Thus al-Qaṣabi's version was one of the first manuscripts published by the Barghash press in Zanzibar, so that, along with the work of Aṭṭayyish and al-Sâlimi, the Ibâḍis could stand up with the others and be counted. So, al-Sâlimi proclaimed,<sup>31</sup> al-Rabî''s work was the first book after the Qur'ân, to which Aṭṭayyish added,<sup>32</sup> 'the truest *ḥadīth* are those related by al-Rabî' b. Ḥabîb from Abû 'Ubayda from Jâbir b. Zayd from a Companion from the Prophet', followed in descending order, in the Ibâḍi view, by al-Bukhâri and Muslim, both of whom are above the *Muwaṭṭa'* of Mâlik.

Splendid! But unlike the Sunni collections, which were formative, the Ibâḍis in the early years never quoted *ḥadīth* at all, at least not in Oman, and when they did they were as adjuncts without *isnâds*. And even in the Maghrib, Hûd's *Tafsîr* shows that they were quoted indirectly from other works and also without *isnâd*. So by the time this *ḥadīth* collection appeared in the 6/12<sup>th</sup> century, the Ibâḍi *madhhab* was complete in its essentials and all it did was to rationalize *ex post facto* some of its *âthâr*. Ibâḍism had followed its own line of development from the earliest days, and the extant texts show an originality that would have been better preserved without the attempt at normalization. Even today, little reference is made to the Ibâḍi version of *ḥadīth* and the commentary in modern editions on old works normally refer to the standard

---

Sunni collections. It has never convinced. On the contrary, it has tended to discredit and led the Ibâḍis to be known in the Maghrib as the 'fifthers'.

### Normalization

Unfortunately, this intensification of madhhabization that developed from the 5/11<sup>th</sup> to the 6/12<sup>th</sup> centuries became the basis of a neo-Ibâḍism, of immense scholarship it is true, but which nevertheless calqued itself on the norms of Sunnism. Francesca (2002) illustrates this process perfectly. The early Madinese recognized that minted coins represented a higher value than unworked gold and therefore allowed repayment by a larger weight than that represented by the coins. This was considered a serious (p.437) infringement of *al-ribâ fî'l-nasî'a* (a credit usury) by the Sunnis. Its practice was nevertheless recognized as fair by the Ibâḍis, and by the time of Ibn Baraka, who knew his Sunni sources, he continued to permit it on the grounds that the Sunnis had deliberately rejected the relevant *ḥadîth* related by Ibn 'Abbâs from Usâma b. Zayd. That view prevailed until Muḥammad Aṭfayyish (d. 1914) overruled the Ibâḍi tradition by citing Sunni sources to show that Ibn Abbâs had subsequently repented of his opinion!

So, in the process of madhhabization based on Sunni norms the model of historical evolution and rationalization of origins in Basra as given by the Maghribis (partly based on the so-called *K. Abi Sufyân*) became a straitjacket into which the much more fluid and flexible evolution in Oman has now been forced in order to explain its own origins. Fortunately, the norms of Sunni scholarship did not impose themselves on Oman until relatively recent times. In all the period following that dealt with in this book, and right on through to Ya 'âruba times, the extant material indicates that the Ibâḍi 'ulamâ' continued making their decisions based on the *âthâr* and the pragmatic interpretations necessary to deal with both changing political circumstances and day-to-day matters; there is no indication that they considered the gates of *ijtihâd* closed. So Abû Bakr Aḥmad b. Maddâd in the sixteenth century and Ibn 'Ubaydân in the Ya 'âruba period say of the nine *Jawâmi'* and the likes of the *Bayân al-Shar'*, the *Muṣannaf*, the *Ḍiyâ'*, and so on that they must be verified through the consensus of the current 'ulamâ' over any disputes concerning God's Book and the *sunna* of his Prophet (note, the concept that *sunna* was that of the Prophet has stuck). Even an illegal regime (*umma sawda*) could be right and an Ibâḍi wrong, so long as judgement was based on these three criteria. Furthermore, Ibn 'Ubaydân insists, all this material must be treated with intelligence ('*aql*), for the *sharî'a* cannot be understood without intelligence. And he also divides *walâya* and *barâ'a* into *sharî'a* and *ra'y* forms, with the implication that many of the old disputes that had divided the Rustâq and Nizwâ parties were opinion and not fundamental conditions. Good, common sense prevailed.

*Ḥadîth* scholarship had never been part of the living and evolving Ibâḍi tradition in Oman. It may form a stage on which to display the pyrotechnics of recent scholarship, but it is not integral to the essential characteristics of Ibâḍism. From the start, it was about the consensus that guided the interpretation of God's Book and the conduct of its community and institutions. It passed down the generations, but it was for the existing generation to decide its application under the circumstances prevailing at the time. Long may this tradition continue.

### Notes:

(1) 1950: 2-3.

- (2) Rubinacci 1964 and Cuperly 1984.
- (3) Cf. collected articles in *Variorum* (Ashgate), 1996.
- (4) Details in Juynboll's *Excursus*, loc. cit.
- (5) Ibn Baraka does use the term, but only in a very general way to designate certain major divisions in Islam.
- (6) Assuming that the commentary in the BL Or. 2434 is by him (e.g. 108r where he writes of the *Âl Ruḥayl* and says that Sayf b. Hubayra was one of the Prophet's *farsân*).
- (7) 1979 with revisions as ch. 4 of Cuperly 1984.
- (8) Even after the civil war we still see al-Bisyâni (*Kâshif* edn., ii. 164) selecting for special damnation the *dîns* of the Qadariyya, Murjî'a, and the Azâriqa, the three *bêtes noires* of the Ibâdis from the earliest times.
- (9) Cf. Madelung 1970; Kohlberg 1976.
- (10) For residual differences see Smogorzewski 1919.
- (11) Cf. *EI1*, *Sîrâf*.
- (12) *Aqâlim*, 37 and 96. Amongst the sects he says that the Ibâdiyya had fallen into obscurity (he was writing post the civil war).
- (13) q.v. in *EI2* (Schacht).
- (14) See Cook 2000: 410.
- (15) Cf. the summary of the relation between the Khawârij and 'Ali made by Muḥammad b. Kfafi in *Bull. Fac. Arts* (Cairo), 14:1 (1952), 29-48.
- (16) This is an attempted synthesis from a large number of sources and studies already quoted for the most part, and only cited here for certain specifics. But a great deal is also to be learnt from some of the earliest writings following the French occupation in 1882, even though the Ibâdi leaders did their best not to cooperate, and these I have footnoted as appropriate. To this I can add my own field-work in 1977, when I found the *shaykh* and 'azzâba at Beni Isguen most helpful, as too the Pères Blancs. I have made little attempt to transliterate names, which in any case are largely Arabizations of Berber words.
- (17) Cf. Wilkinson 1987: 233 and n. 10; Ben Moussa 1971.
- (18) Cf. Amat 1888, Charlet 1905, and Féliu 1909. For urban aspects see Cuperly 1981, 1987, and 1988 in Custers 2006: vol. iii.
- (19) Cf. Grossmann 1976.

(20) Motylinski 1885. Once again, Guerara's founding starts with a group of 40 (Walad Bakhâ) who went to the Tell where they saved enough money to buy material for the new settlement. The mutual formal agreement with the Cheurefa also stipulated that the Bakhâ would always consult them over any important decision, while they in turn promised never to side with their enemies.

(21) Milliot 1930.

(22) For further details see Wilkinson 1987: 155-62.

(23) Cf. al-Jannâwuni, *K. al-Waḍ'* (text 92-3; Rubinacci 1964: 591): also Schwartz 1983: 66-70 and compare with 263-6.

(24) Cf. Darjîni, ii. 496, and Ben Moussa 1971: 240 for further examples.

(25) Lewicki 1961.

(26) I deposited the photocopy kindly given my by Dr Werner Schwartz in Exeter University Library and it was this that Kharusi used. The content of the complete work is given by Custers 2006: i. 39.

(27) Ennami 1971: 149 based on Sulaymân b. Yakhlaf al-Mazâti. But if this author did die in 471 then this remark is a gloss.

(28) Cf. Kharusi 1971.

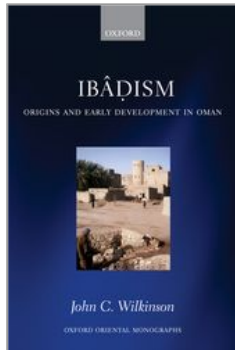
(29) Ed. Muḥammad Idrîs and 'Âshûr b. Yûsuf (1995).

(30) There is, incidentally, a copy in Ibn Ruzayq's *SQ*.

(31) In *Luma`a*

(32) *Wifâ'* i. 7.

University Press Scholarship Online  
Oxford Scholarship Online



## Ibâdism: Origins and Early Development in Oman

John C. Wilkinson

Print publication date: 2010

Print ISBN-13: 9780199588268

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2011

DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.001.0001

## Madhhabization

John C. Wilkinson

DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.003.0014

### [–] Abstract and Keywords

This chapter examines the final stages in Ibâdism developing as a *madhhab*. In Oman it was essentially the work of 'Awtabi who finalized the process of conforming to the criteria of the Shâfi'i-Ash'ari school, but avoiding the Sunni criteria of *hadîth* scholarship by formalizing a chain of Ibâdî *hamalat al-'ilm*, whose *âthâr* provide the equivalent of the Sunni *isnâd* chains. A comparison is made between developments in Oman and the Maghrib where two trends evolved — one introspective, aimed at ensuring the survival of true values in the small communities like the Mزاب; the other to establish oneself as the true *firqâ* and go out and do battle with the others. The latter approach prevailed in Oman, but in a 5–6/11–12th century revivalist movement in the Maghrib it went to the extent of Abû Ya'qûb al-Warjlânî 'Arranging (*Tartîb*)' a *hadîth* collection, supposedly essentially transmitted by al-Rabî' b. Habîb from Abû 'Ubayda and back through Jâbir b. Zayd to Ibn 'Abbâs and the first Muslims. The origins of this work (along with other important Mashriqî material preserved in the Maghrib, notably the *Mudawwana*) is examined and shown to be a manipulation that has done great disservice to the Ibâdîs, leading them to be called the 'Fifthers' in the Maghrib. At the same time, the Maghribis rationalized the early history of Ibâdism with a line of Imams in *kitmân* in Basra, exaggerating the role of Abû 'Ubayda and eliminating the key role played by other proto-Ibâdîs. It was only really with the development of an Ibâdî renaissance from the 17th century onwards and yet further conformism of the *madhhab* to Sunni norms that this *hadîth* collection found nominal acceptance in Oman along with the Maghribi model of Ibâdî origins.

*Keywords:* madhhabization, 'Awtabi, Shâfi'i, Oman, Maghrib, Ibâdî origins, Ibâdism, Mudawwana, hadîth

Just as the 6/12<sup>th</sup> century saw Ibâḍism shifting from a still politically active movement to one struggling for survival, so the very nature of its rationale also became modified. This is quite clear from comparing 'Awtabi's *exposé* around the beginning of the century to that of Qalhâti at the start of the next.

### 'Awtabi and Shâfi'i

'Awtabi's opening on *uṣûl* in Book III of his *Ḍiyâ'* shows how far Ibâḍi thought had become aligned with Sunni, with one great exception, the critique for reliable *ḥadîth*. So, he starts: 'Truth (*ḥaqq*) derives from four elements, the Qur'ân, the Sunna, *ijmâ'*, and *ḥujja t al-'aql*. Some say also *tawâtir al-akhbâr* (i.e. widely transmitted statements from which necessary knowledge derives).' This complements his statement that what comes from the Qur'ân is *fard*, from the Prophet *sunna*, and from the just Imams *âthâr*. The first element, the Qur'ân, is common to both Sunnis and Ibâḍis and needs no comment. For the Ibâḍis, there was by now nothing seriously in dispute concerning fundamental *ta'wîl* and they were also producing their own *tafsîr*.

With regards to Sunna, 'Awtabi has also adopted the same basic criterion as Shâfi'i: it is purely and simply *sunnat al-nabî*. According to Schacht's well known thesis<sup>1</sup>

Shâfi'i was the first lawyer to define *sunna* as the model behaviour of the Prophet, in contrast with his predecessors for whom it was not necessarily connected with the Prophet ... Two generations before Shâfi'i reference to traditions from Companions and Successors was the rule, to traditions from the Prophet himself the exception, and it was left to Shâfi'i to make the exception his principle.

That does not necessarily mean that 'Awtabi had derived his definition from Shâfi'i. The obligation to adhere to the *sunnat al-nabî* had always been present in Ibâḍism, but it is clear that this limiting use of the term **(p.414)** had been taking hold during the century in which the Shâfi'i school had come to the fore. Shâfi'i's own influence in the 3/9<sup>th</sup> century has been exaggerated, according to Hallaq (1993). Ibn Ḥanbal is said to have told one of his students that the traditionist had no use for his books while Bukhâri and Muslim record not a single tradition from him. It was Ibn Surayj and his pupils in the 4/10<sup>th</sup> century who established his reputation as the originator of the *uṣûl al-fîqh* principles. Shâfi'i was himself not uninfluenced by Mu'tazilism and his strength had been in finding a middle way between the traditionalists and the rationalists through a limited form of *ra'y*, *qiyâs*. His was 'the first attempt at synthesizing the disciplined exercise of human reasoning and the complete assimilation of revelation as the basis of the law ... His law and jurisprudence represented not the pivotal point of Islamic law but rather a crude beginnings at the outset of the [2/]8<sup>th</sup> century and the true culmination that took place nearly a century after his death.'

'Awtabi is fully aware of the tension between the *aṣḥâb al-ḥadîth wa'l-âthâr* and the *aṣḥâb al-ra'y*. The former rely only on what is recounted from the Prophet, the Companions, and the *Tâbi 'în* for both *fîqh* and what was *halâl wa harâm*; and that using *qiyâs* from *ra'y* was not permitted (*wa mâ naqîs bi ra'yinâ*) etc. (he also notes that they agree that faith is both words and deeds, and that they say the Qur'ân is not created and declare those who do so are *kuffâr*, etc.).

'Awtabi is probably referring to the extremist Zâhiriyya approach in this *exposé*, but it should be

noted that he never uses the term Sunnis but assimilates them under the term *aṣḥâb al-ḥadîth*. Nor does Ibn Baraka who, a century earlier, condemns them. Theirs, he says, was essentially the *ṭarîqat al- 'aql*, not that of *al-sam'* . 'Aql could not provide proof of a *farîda* (religious obligation) and at best was a *faḍîla* (commendable); by 'aql he probably meant also its limited form of reasoning, *qiyâs*.

So whether under Shâfi'i influence or not, once the Ibâḍis accepted that *sunna* is what comes from the Prophet, two questions immediately arose. First, what of the *sunna* of the early Muslims, of Abû Bakr and 'Umar? It is clear from at least as early as Shabîb b. 'Aṭiyya and Ḥâjib al-Ṭâ'iy that the early *sunna*, including that of the Prophet, had been assimilated into the *âthâr*. The *âthâr al-â imma* are those matters that the 'ulamâ' *al-Muslimîn* had agreed, including what Bashîr b. Abi 'Abdullâh called generally accepted *riwâyât*; and 'Awtabi specifically designates this common ground by the term *ijmâ'* . That is why he adds the term *wa'l-âthâr* to the *aṣḥâb al-ḥadîth*, to indicate that the Ibâḍis were now aligned with the same approach, but rather than using the Sunni criterion of *ḥadîth* transmission they were using their own *âthâr* line. So here again he has quite explicitly accepted the third Sunni criterion of consensus. Indeed, when discussing *ijmâ'*  he even cites the famous *ḥadîth* (without even identifying (p.415) it as such) that the *umma* would never agree on an error (*khata'* ); and he comments that it has been said that the *umma* in any period is the *ahl al-ḥaqq wa jamâ at ahl al-ḥaqq*.

But what remains to be explained is how these *âthâr* were derived. For the Sunnis the answer is simple: they had the six great collections of *ḥadîth*, the most important of which had been compiled in the first half of the 3/9<sup>th</sup> century (Bukhârî d. 256, Muslim d. 261, etc.). The argument between the *aṣḥâb al-ḥadîth* and *aṣḥâb al-ra'y* in fact was over the criteria to interpret them, whether a limited form of *ra'y* designated *qiyâs* was permitted or not. It was an issue very much to the fore in that century and was what divided the Zâhiriyya from the Shâfi'is; both these schools were influential in Oman (see below). But for the period covered by this book these standard *ḥadîth* collections did not form overt works of reference for the Ibâḍis. Furthermore, if we look at what Jâbir b. Zayd said, or the *âthâr* of al-Rabî' which form part of the Ibâḍi *âthâr*, all is virtually opinion (*ra'y*), only occasionally is there a hint of how it might have been derived. In other words, the early Ibâḍis along with the proto-Sunnis would have been classified with the *aṣḥâb al-ra'y*. Which is why Ibn Baraka says that those who now claimed to have this new revealed truth had no right to condemn others to eternal hellfire. What of those who were good Muslims before these new revelations?

What is interesting is to examine how long *ra'y* lasted among the Ibâḍis. Here the Maghribis seem to differ from 'Awtabi. The three equivalents of the Qur'ân, the *sunna*, and the *âthâr* in the *K. al-Waqd'*  of the Nafûsan (Abû Zakariyyâ' b. al-Khayr) al-Jannâwuni (probably first half 6/12<sup>th</sup> century), are *tanzîl* (the Qur'ân), the *sunna*, and in one place *ra'y*, in another *ijmâ'* . As Rubinacci and Cuperly in their studies<sup>2</sup> of this author have argued, *ra'y* was personal reflection concerning the two basic sources and became assimilated into *ijmâ'* ; its limited form of *qiyâs* was not referred to until much later. Even Abû Ya'qûb Yûsuf al-Warjlani (d. 570/1174) continued to use the very general form 'aql. That identification of *ra'y* with 'aql seems in some measure to conform with what Abû Sa'id al-Kudami had written back in the early 4/10<sup>th</sup> century: 'the *sunna*,

---

all of it, is what illuminates (*ta'wîl*) God's Book, in the same way as the *ijmâ'* is what explains God's Book ... and the opinion of the *ahl al-ra'y* of the Muslims, extracting argument from intelligence (*yukhraj ḥujja min al-ma' qûl*).<sup>1</sup> Nothing in the Maghribi sources, nor indeed in Abû Sa'id al-Kudami, implies that *sunna* was confined to the Prophet. Yet there does seem to be a convergence between Abû Sa'id's *yukhraj ḥujja min al-ma' qûl* with Shâfi'i's *qiyâs*, that is, to infer from the two primary sources its inherent concept (*ma' qûl al-aql*). In the *Muhârabâ* Bashîr speaks of (p.416) insights (*'uqûl*) that God has provided as proof, guidance in the true path. He expands on this in his *K. al-Raṣf* (§§14–21) in connection with *tafsîr alma' lûm wa'l-majhûl*, explaining that *'ilm* has two *ḍarb*, *ḥiss wa qiyâs*. The latter is the true path. There can be no *'ḥujja 'aqaliyya wa dalâla ghariziyya dûna samâ' ...* In other words, proof must be based on the guidance of revealed law; which is what Ibn Baraka was also saying when he stated that at best *'aql* might be valid for a *faḍîla*, but not a *farîḍa*. But Bashîr's work is strongly tinted with Mu'tazilism, whereas 'Awtabi is basically talking about *ijtihâd* as deriving from a holistic theological-cum-legal concept, analogous to that of the Shâfi'i-Ash'arites. He reinforces the point by quoting al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-Ḥallâbi, 'one of our *qawm*', that all guides (*dalâ'il*) to the *shar'* have two forms (*ḍarb*), *aql wa ma' qûl aql*. This shift towards the Shâfi'i criterion becomes explicit in his subsequent elaborations.

It is possible that part of the difference between the Maghribi and Omani Ibâdîs over *'aql* is due to the regional influence of the Mâliki and Shâfi'i schools and because Mu'tazilism was deeply rooted in North Africa. Although 'Awtabi does not use the term Sunni, he does speak specifically of these two *fiqh* schools, which he pairs, simply saying that they dispute over many things and are much in error. Nevertheless, in error or not, 'Awtabi does not reject the fourth Shâfi'i criterion, *qiyâs*. As part of his initial *exposé* on *uṣûl* he defines two terms, *ajsâm* and *'arâḍ*. The former are essentially natural objects (day and night, the stars, rocks, mountains, etc.), the latter human properties. They include any human *ḥarakât*, magic, illness, doings, power, weakness, sleep, service, acts, any happenings (*aḥdâth*) with a temporal dimension, natural or otherwise, and both forms of *'ilm* and *'aql* (these forms he deals with elsewhere). It will be observed that the old debates from Mu'tazili times of whether Allâh was a *jism* and the impossibility of dissociating *al-jawhar wa'l-'arâḍ* is not even considered. Like it or not, 'Awtabi was highly influenced by the new Sunni theological schools. So if *'ilm* and *'aql* are human and not divine qualities, then there has to be some hermeneutic link for interpreting the scriptures. Once again the answer is more or less that of the Sunni-Ash'arites, *'illa*. *'Illa* is a *ma'nâ*, in other words an intrinsic quality of God's essence, 'from which one seeks that guidance which is the proof of God (*ḥujjat Allâh*)', 'Awtabi explains. (This, incidentally is the first use I have consciously noticed of the term *ma'nâ* in Mashriqi authors; see also his *exposé* on the subject in the References). So it forms that *ḥujjat al-'aql*, the fourth element which, as he stated initially, made up the *ḥaqq*. To emphasize this 'Awtabi starts his next chapter, which is specifically devoted to *qiyâs*, by stating that *qiyâs* is not permitted without *'ilal* (*wa lâ yajûz yuqâs illâ alâ ma'lûl*). And in his development of the subject he discusses *ra'y*, which he couples with *ijtihâd* as the *aṣḥâb al-ra'y* did, and (p.417) launches into a series of what look like *mawqûf ḥadîth* from Companions to make his point, that no *ra'y* became accepted until proof was given of the validity of the opinion that was in dispute.



So 'Awtabi seems to have gone all the way with Shâfi'i with the one exception of proof by *ḥadīth* scholarship. By his logic, the *â'immat al-Muslimîn* had established the *âthâr* by *ijmâ'* based on the Qur'ân and the Sunna and had used *qiyâs* to establish acceptable *ḥadīth*, but with no reference to the *isnâd* criterion for judging the reliability of a Prophetic transmission. The *â'immat al-Muslimîn* were themselves the transmitters. That is why 'Awtabi had two categories of who they were. The first designated the main figures considered as in *walâya*. The list is a jumble of the leading '*ulamâ'* in rough chronological order, but not neatly ordered by *ṭabaqât* (very much a Maghribi approach). In this appear all those 'proto-Ibâdis', Ḍumâm, Abû Nûh, Ja'far al-Sammâk, and so on, and significantly, as we shall see, Abû 'Ubayda. This is followed by a *barâ'a* list which includes the usual names from the first *fitna*, followed by those more specific to Ibâdi disputes, Hârûn [b. al-Yamân] and his son 'Abdullâh and their followers and partisans, plus those who demonstrated they were using *shakk* to withhold judgement, notably on the al-Ṣalt affair (i.e. the Nizwâ party). Finally comes a *wuqûf* list, which designates those about whom there was real question (*wuqûf su'âl*). From a doctrinal point of view, by far and away the most important of these is al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri. That neatly disposed of Jâbir b. Zayd's much better-known and far more influential contemporary, even though we know from Hûd's *Tafsîr* that much of what he said, or reputedly said, was actually absorbed by the Ibâdis.

#### Ḥamalât al-'ilm

But to be consistent with the generally accepted Sunni criteria of a chain of transmission, 'Awtabi needs a second category, a specific Ibâdi transmitter chain (*ḥamalât al-'ilm*) which gets as close as he can to origins, to the Companions of the Prophet via a *tâbi'i* whom they can claim as their own. That figure, of course, is Jâbir b. Zayd. The only other person in Basra who might have been seriously considered as a direct *sunna* source was Anas b. Mâlik. He is put in his place in the *K. Abi Sufyân*, by anecdotal material showing the respect in which Anas held Jâbir, 'today has died the most learned man on Earth'. The status of Anas, in any case, has been considerably elevated by the Sunnis, precisely because he was a late Companion and therefore a target for *ḥadīth* creation. Juynboll<sup>3</sup> has argued that the Companions did not generate *ḥadīth*, and that although (p.418) Anas was one of the last of the *âkhirîn*, he himself only seems to have originated two, and the common links claiming him as their origin appear in the following generation. Furthermore, the story that as a young man he entered the service of the Prophet is suspect and post-dated his death by at least fifty years. So Anas does not really enter the Ibâdi picture until Abû Ya'qûb al-Warjîlânî started manufacturing the Ibâdi *ḥadīth* collection.

The accepted reliable Companion, well established before 'Awtabi's time, was Ibn 'Abbâs (d. 68/687 aged perhaps 70), the Ibâdi *baḥr al-'ulûm*, and there is little question that Jâbir really did know him, as witness his correspondence, though whether as closely as the Ibâdis make out is another matter. Ibn 'Abbâs is, of course, a major source for the Sunni collections with a high level of reliability by their norms, the third most prolific in Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad* (following Abû Hurayra and Madina's own particular 'Companion' 'Abdullâh b. 'Umar d. c. 74/693 aged 86). So if he was such an important source for *marfû' ḥadīth* in Muslim tradition then it is reasonable for the Ibâdis to presume that Jâbir pumped him for the same information and passed it on to his pupil al-Rabî'. 'Awtabi is a bit confused about whether it was seventy at Badr he knew, for there is a tradition that none of those at Badr survived the first *fitna*, whereas some clearly did; indeed

---

the last two died in 60 and 61.<sup>4</sup> But to make sure, Jâbir's own contacts are reinforced by *hamaling* the 'ilm direct from 'Â'isha (d. 57/677 aged 65) and 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭâb (better not quote his death-date!). The second point to observe is that *the* one source to transmit the 'ilm from Jâbir, according to 'Awtabi, is al-Rabî'. As shown in the previous chapter, this is not a slip. In one of 'Awtabi's transmission lists Abû 'Ubayda does not occur at all, in another he comes after al-Rabî'.

So how do we reconcile that with the fact that the Maghribi sources place Abû 'Ubayda as the great successor and with the evidence we have from al-Rabî' himself? As shown in Chapter 6, al-Rabî''s *Âthâr* were recorded by Abû Şufra, probably in the first third of the third century, apparently from an intermediary, Haytham. In the 1191/1777 manuscript of the *Dîwân al-Ma'rûḍ*, al-Rabî''s *Âthâr* make up the first thirty-two pages, the first thirteen to fourteen of which are al-Rabî' < Ḍumâm < Jâbir, though occasionally the intermediary is Abû Nûḥ or Abû Nûḥ and Ḍumâm. This obviously comprises the work that was known as *K. Ḍumâm*, coupled perhaps with vestiges of the *K. Abi Nûḥ* (a source quoted in the *K. al-Taqyîd*). Page 14 marks a change of style, with Abû Sufyân's views being quoted, followed by a bloc of 'I asked him'; but it is not clear who is asking whom, possibly Abû Sufyân asking al-Rabî'. On page 15 there is a brief return to the earlier format, but on page 16 the (p.419) *riwâya* from Ḍumâm almost stop and other sources appear. Here Abû 'Ubayda at last appears briefly as a link between al-Rabî' and Jâbir, and he also quotes Mujâhid (b. Jabr al-Makki, d. 104/722). The rest of the work is mainly other sources for Jâbir's material, among them al-Rabî' direct from Jâbir. Towards the end we shift into longer *isnâds*: Jumayyil al-Khwarzmi < al-Rabî' < Abû 'Ubayda < Jâbir < Ibn 'Abbâs; or Abû Ayyûb Wâ'il < al-Rabî' < Abû 'Ubayda < Jâbir < Ibn 'Abbâs (about *ghanîma*). Here, on page 21, for the first time the classical Ibâḍî lineage accepted in the Maghrib features. In other words, it is not until the final two sources, who would have been contemporaries of Abû Şufyân and Abû Sufra, that the relative position of al-Rabî' and Abû 'Ubayda as given by 'Awtabi is inverted, and an ascendancy higher than Jâbir appears. That at last conforms with the *K. Abi Sufyân* which laid down the sequence of the early Ibâḍîs for the Maghribis.

'Awtabi's *hamal* list, I would suggest, is in fact an attempt to apply to the Ibâḍî *âthâr* the Sunni criterion for the reliability of *ḥadîth*, that of a neat, short transmission, but with an Ibâḍî *isnâd*; al-Rabî' from Jâbir thence to a Companion (Ibn 'Abbâs). So al-Rabî' became his *mu'ammâr*, one of those wonderful centenarian giants of old who conveniently bridge awkward gaps or shorten transmission lines. But in the case of the Ibâḍîs it was not *ḥadîth* being transmitted, but the *âthâr*. The *âthâr* are the originality of what 'Awtabi now calls the Ibâḍî *madhhab*, seemingly the first time that Ibâḍism is really designated as such.<sup>5</sup> *Âthâr/ijmâ'* from the start had been the basis of what was now being presented as a 'school'. *Sunna*, as such, was not really an independent criterion, any more than were *ḥadîth*; they existed through a consensual assimilation into the *âthâr*. This possibly originally represented the approach of the proto-Sunnis too, Calder's 'communal *sunna*'. But the basis for that consensus had now developed its own rationale, conforming to that of the Shâfi'is, and Ibâḍism was moving on a converging course. So instead of assessing *ḥadîth* by the *isnâd* criterion, reliability for 'Awtabi lay in a teacher line, a chain of leading scholars transmitting and elaborating the 'ilm over the generations, reaching back from his Rustâq school predecessors, al-Bisyâni and Ibn Baraka, to al-Rabî', Jâbir b. Zayd,

Ibn 'Abbâs, and those they knew from the original Muslims, and thence the Prophet, the angel Gabriel, and God. 'Awtabi does not allow such unimportant matters as whether that chain is historically coherent to detract from his thesis; the general line is clear, *isnâd* critique was not a criterion for *ḥamalât al-'ilm*, any more than it was (overtly) for evaluating the *ḥadîth* that became incorporated into the *âthâr*.

**(p.420)** Recording in writing (*taqyîd*) what the *aṣḥâb* had said, on the other hand, had become significant, partly due to the loss of archives and books in the civil war. In the process such early sources as Sâlim b. Dhakwân had been rediscovered, while there are pointers in 'Awtabi's own writings, as too the *Bayân al-Shar'* and Ibn Waṣṣâf's commentary on Ibn al-Nazar's *Da'â'im*,<sup>6</sup> that part at least of the *K. Abi Sufyân* was in circulation among Omani scholars (the *terminus ad quem* is the *K. al-Taqyîd* manuscript of 625 AH). Abû Sufyan's supposed book, which had been so influential in developing the Maghribi account of Ibâḍi origins, had therefore also begun to influence the Omani account. But as 'Awtabi's work shows, the Maghribi and Omani models were by no means as yet congruent.

#### The opening of the gates of *ijtihâd* to non-Ibâḍi scholars

So another feature relevant to 'Awtabi's notions concerning *sunna* and *âthâr* is the fact that purely Ibâḍi *âthâr* were no longer the only point of reference. Ibn Baraka and Abû Saïd al-Kudami had opened the gates of Ibâḍi *ijtihâd*, albeit not using that term, to non-Ibâḍi Muslim scholars and as a result the '*ulamâ*' started quoting the Prophet with increasing frequency, but without explaining the source for his statements. The Maghrib likewise. The '*aqîda* of Abû Sahl Yaḥyâ b. Ibrâhîm al-Warjlâni (probably 6/12<sup>th</sup> century) quotes tradition going back not only to Ibn Abbâs, but also Anas b. Mâlik, Mujâhid, Bukhâri, and al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri, very rarely with *isnâds* and certainly no critique of authenticity. However, Cuperly notes,<sup>7</sup> he only really uses these sources to emphasize certain desirable qualities, never for determining dogma; for that, Ibâḍi authors alone are valid. That accords with Ibn Baraka's notion that the communal Sunna which had not already been absorbed into the *âthâr* could only be a guide for *faḍîla*, not *sam'*. Even so, the Ibâḍis were now absorbing Sunni material in to their *madhhab*, the term they now apply to their own school. Hitherto the terms they generally used was simply '*ilm*, *da'wa*, or *dîn*, generally *dîn al-Muslimîn* (= the true *dîn* of the Ibâḍis) or occasionally *dîn al-Ibâḍiyya*. But now, seemingly for the first time, 'Awtabi is treating it as an actual school, a *madhhab*; like the Sunnis.

Behind this evolution lies the fact that after the civil war the Omanis had been laid wide open to other doctrines. They always had been, to some extent, viz their concern with rebutting Qadariyya, Murji'a, **(p.421)** Mu'tazili, and Khâriji views, along with their own internal schisms.<sup>8</sup> In doing so, the Ibâḍis, perhaps unconsciously, had generally aligned themselves with what became considered as orthodox views, even with respect to the theory of the Imamate. So when, as a result of the civil war, they found themselves directly challenged by radical Shi'i activism, Qarmaṭi, Ismâ'îli, and extremist Twelver propaganda, they simply rejected these views as beyond the pale. They were essentially the doctrines of political rivals with dangerous social overtones that did not merit debate, and Qalhâti lays into them by attributing to them every perversion he could think of in his *Maqâma*. On the other hand, more moderate doctrines of Imâmi Shi'ism and residual Mu'tazili thought were still something of a challenge. There is

---

striking convergence between the Imâmiyya and Ibâdi views<sup>9</sup> in such matters as *taqiyya*, the *fâsiq*, the grave sinner whom the Zaydis also classify as *kâfir al-ni'ma*, as too the treatment of *ahl al-baghy* (for the Shi'a, those who fought against the twelve Imams). Their role-model is 'Ali's behaviour, an exemplar the Ibâdis avoid referring to by citing supposed earlier precedents concerning not taking *ghanîma* and *saby* from Muslims. The Mu'tazila were still particularly important in the Maghrib, but not without influence in the Mashriq, notably over human reasoning as an independent criterion, 'Awtabi's *bête noire* as his treatise on '*aql* and *qiyâs* demonstrates. The Creation of the Qur'ân, which was fundamentally a Mu'tazili doctrine, also still remained a matter of debate for the Ibâdis. But the main challenge had now become Shâfi'i-Ash'arism.

So, I would suggest, 'Awtabi represented the end of a line in theological and legal thought that had been developing during the course of the 4/10<sup>th</sup> century, influenced notably by Ibn Baraka and al-Bisyâni, whose importance he recognizes in his *hamalat al-'ilm* list. That evolution saw an increasing convergence with the Shâfi'i principles his followers adumbrated during the same period. Thus, by 'Awtabi's time that Sunni school and its Ash'arite theological underpinnings represented the main regional challenge to the Ibâdis in Oman and more generally in southern Arabia and its associated maritime empire. By finding the common ground, the Ibâdis were then able to home in on those 'errors' that 'Awtabi says they and the Mâlikis were guilty of. What these were becomes clearer in the work of Qalhâti.

#### **(p.422) Qalhâti's Period**

Qalhâti's *Maqâma* begins with a dialogue between the *qawl al-fâsiq* and the *jawâb* of the Omani missionary who brought the Kilwans back into the fold. This is what he finds the renegades saying:

We are the progeny (*sulâla*) of Qâdi al-Walîd b. Sulaymân. I [the *fâsiq*] have left the *madhhab* of al-Walîd and adopted the new *madhhab*; I have deposed the *madhhab* of 'Abdullâh Ibn Ibâd and followed the *madhhab* of those who [permit] intercourse during menstruation and the period of childbirth, the *madhhab al-la'b wa'l-raqs wa'l-irtikâd* (play/gambling, dancing, running races). I believe in all the extremist sects such as the Şûfis, Jawâliqa, Dahriyya, and Zanâdiqa ... This new religion is named after Abû 'Aliyân and I have studied it two years. We relate that in his *imâma* there are two *qawls* in everything.

The *fâsiq* then goes on to say how it permits licentious behaviour, homosexuality, intercourse during forbidden times, et cetera, et cetera. As already noted, this is no more than attributing all that is abhorrent to such extremists. Much more to the point is the continuous reiteration of the term *madhhab*. So, also incorporated into the Kilwa manuscript is part of the work modelled on the *K. al-Firdaws*, of Qalhâti's contemporary 'Abd al-Sallâm b. Sa'id, entitled *tawhîd wa tafsîruhu 'alâ madhhab al-Muslimîn*.

This emphasis on *madhhab* is not coincidental. It is fundamental. The real challenge doctrinally to the Ibâdis was Sunnism. In the Maghrib it was essentially the Mâlikis,<sup>10</sup> but in Oman it was the other schools. Thus we find Abû Saîd al-Ḥasan b. 'Abdullâh al-Sîrâfi (who also studied with Ibn Durayd) crossed over to Oman to study Ḥanafî law there.<sup>11</sup> Muqaddasi<sup>12</sup> reports that there

were Da'ûdiyya in Oman and for him they are one of the four main schools. Taking their name from the Imam of the Zâhiriyya, Dâwûd b. Khalaf al-Işfahâni (c. 200–270/884),<sup>13</sup> they were indeed of importance at that time. Dâwud had studied *ḥadîth* under well-known authorities in Basra, Baghdad, and Nishapur before settling in Baghdad and took Shâfi'i doctrines to extremes. Relying exclusively on the Qur'ân and *ḥadîth*, he not only rejected personal reasoning (*ra'y*) as Shâfi'i had done, but also *qiyâs* and adhered to the literal (*zâhir*) meaning of the Qur'ân and *ḥadîth*. Nevertheless, the real challenge regionally to the Ibâḍis came from the Shâfi'i school itself.

Over the centuries Sunnism was to become accepted as a more or less a neutral form of Islam by the Ibâḍis, but in the period we are dealing with (**p.423**) it represented a positive challenge. Northern Oman, finally alienated by the intransigence of the Rustâq school, signalled their breach by adopting Shâfi'i Sunnism: in Kilwa it eventually it won out, as too in the Yemen-Hadramawt. This is evident from the start of Qalhâti's *Maqâma*, as its commentary shows. That was written by Râshid b. 'Umar b. Aḥmad of Su'âl Nizwâ, responding to a request by the Omanis to explain Qalhâti's work. That, he says, would be too great a task, incorporating the whole Ibâḍi *milla* (note the term), and also the split between the Rustâq and Nizwâ schools. Instead, he would explain the context of its writing, in so far as he could reconstruct it, along with the meaning of some of the phrases which Qalhâti puts into the mouth of the *fâsiq*. This Râshid b. 'Umar was a direct descendant of Ibn al-Nazar, and related to the family of one of Qalhâti's contemporaries, and it was through these connections that he wrote the commentary. The fact that in referring to the Rustâq-Nizwâ parties dispute he mentions that one of the famous lines descending from the teacher of the author of the *Muṣannaf*, whose death-dates are recorded over some nine generations, was above them shows that Râshid was two or three generations on from Qalhâti, and writing getting on for 100 years later. This is also further evidence that Ibâḍism was very much alive in central Oman in the fourteenth century.

His commentary, which I have only skimmed through on the one occasion I had access to the manuscripts, throws a quite different light on what Qalhâti was driving at. It was not the extreme Shi'is but the Shâfi'is. Thus the phrase the *madhhab al-la'b* is nothing to do with the decadent frivolity and gambling of Abû 'Aliyân's followers, but a jibe that the Shâfi'is permitted the playing of chess (*shaṭranj*) in the vicinity of the mosque and *sûq*, a grave sin in their eyes;<sup>14</sup> similarly, the *imâma* which has two *qawls* in answer to everything is simply a poke at the fact that they produce conflicting dicta.

The *Maqâma* is thus a verse exercise to display the kind of information which Qalhâti dealt with in his major work, the two-volume *K. al-Kashf wa'l-bayân*. It is the second volume that European scholars are familiar with, through the manuscript copy (1104/1692) in the British Library (Or 2606). This treats the seventy-three *firqas* along the line of the standard *al-milal wa'l-niḥal* books (cf. al-Baghdâdi, d. 429/1037, and Shahrastâni famous work, written in 521/1127–8), and is superficially of little interest, except for its treatment of the early Khawârij, based on standard sources like the *K. al-Nahrawân*, which were also available to the classical writers,<sup>15</sup> and a brief *exposé* of the true *madhhab* with which the work (**p.424**) ends, along with 'Awtabi's *ḥamalat al-'ilm* list. It is, incidentally, probably the source for chapters 28 and 29 of the *Kashf al-Ghumma*. From the point of view of Ibâḍism itself, the real interest lies in the first volume, which I saw in

---

the Maktabat al-Ghannâ in Beni Isguen (Mzab). As its fully expanded title shows, it is an *exposé* of the Ibâdi credo, a polemic which proceeds through refutation: *fî tawhîd al-bayân wa tafsîr al-mushâkil al-Qur'ân wa'l-radd 'âl'lâ'l-mushabbih, wa'l-qadariyya wa'l-mu'tazila wa'l-qâyilîn; nuhâlifuhu bi'l-ḥujja wa'l-burhân min kitâb wa'l-kashf wa'l-bayân.*

#### The Maghrib: the *ḥalqa*<sup>16</sup>

In other words, Qalhâti is taking on the other sects frontally, on their own terms and criteria. It is no coincidence that it bears a certain affinity with the definitive Maghribi work concerning Ibâdi dogma and its relations with other schools and theologies, the *K. al-Dalîl wa'l-Burhân* of Abû Ya'qûb Yûsuf b. Ibrâhîm al-Sadarâti/Warjilâni, who died in 570/1174-5. Whether the two met is impossible to say, but we do know that Abû Ya'qûb made the Pilgrimage and it was a period when there was a considerable exchange of books between the Omanis and the North Africans. Abû'l-'Abbâs Aḥmad b. Abi 'Abdullâh Muḥammad b. Bakr al-Nafûsi (d. 501/1111, see below) states that when he studied the '*Dîwân*' of the Nafûsa he found it contained some 33,000 sections from books that came from the Mashriq.

In the Maghrib there had been no revival of the Imamate after the Rustamids, and the approach to survival as their communities dispersed was the institution of the *ḥalqa*. This is surely in part calqued on the loose organization of the '*ulamâ*' in Basra, the *jamâ'at al-Muslimîn*, but it also takes many of its peculiarities from the special conditions pertaining in the Maghrib and which, as Grossmann (1976) emphasizes, was built on the '*urf*' that regulated their religious, social, and political relationships. Essentially it was an ascetic religious community, concerned with maintaining high moral standards, to the point that in certain communities the '*azzâba*' were discouraged from marrying and were distinguished also by their dress and even tonsure. To understand certain aspects of the institution one might be better off looking at St Augustine than Islamic theology (as too in certain customs of *ḥubûs/waqf*). The practices in the (p.425) Tunisian Jerid, which may show certain Nukkarite tendencies, seem to be the earliest information we have about such an organization, but the first codification was that of Abû 'Abdullâh Muḥammad b. Bakr al-Nafûsi (d. 440/1048-9), who set up the institution in Wargla. He was the leading religious figure in the Wadi Righ area, where the main Ibâdi centre at Sadrâta, 8 km from Warjilân (Wargla/Ouargla), was founded in 296/909 by the last Rustamid Imam who fled there after the destruction of Tahert. But it was on a major caravan route, and exposed to disorders, so that Abû 'Abdullâh spent a year in the Wadi Mya at Ifren where he came into contact with the neighbouring tribes of the so-called B. Muṣ'ab (Mzab/Mîzâb), whom he started converting from Mu'tazilism. As a result he prepared the way for a more remote refuge, well before the Hilâli invasion. The first Ibâdi settlement in the Mzab was founded al-Ateuf (al-'Aṭaf) in 402/1011-12, near the *ksûr* created by elements of the nomadic Cheurfa (Shurafâ') after they had been driven out of Fez.

The appearance of the terrible Bani Hilâl and their destruction of Sadrâta in 443/1051 hastened the exodus, so that Ibâdis from Wargla, W. Righ, Nafûsa, and Jerba founded three other settlements (Bou Noura, Beni Isguen, and the original Melika), and possibly even the fifth, Ghardaia, between 437 (or 440) and 445/1053. It is interesting to note that Abû Ya'qûb al-Warjilâni actually makes a specific category of *fitna* in the case of the Bani Hilâl when discussing resistance to the *a'râb* (Arabs, nomads?). It is also worth noting, in connection with the founding

---

of such new settlements, that Ibâḍi tradition considered that a mosque may be built and an 'azzâba created anywhere forty families gather to settle. This in fact goes back to the model of Abû Bilâl and the idea that a *khurûj* requires a minimum of forty *shurât*. So Bâba al-Jamma (Ti Gamma) set off to found what became the largest settlement, Ghardaia, when he had enrolled forty Ibâḍi followers around 477 (variant 445), and similarly it was a group of forty Walad Bakhâ who formed the core of the much later settlement of Guerarra. We find a similar manifestation in the mid-nineteenth century in Oman, with the curious incident of a group of forty Yâl Sa'd on the Batina swearing to *shirâ'* and attacking the Âl Bû Sa'id' governor of Suwayq.<sup>17</sup>

While at Ateuf, Abû 'Abdullâh also drew up the regulation of the *irwân*, a Berber term used solely in the Mzab for the degree below the 'azzâba. And it was his son, Abû'l-Abbâs Aḥmad (d. 501/1111), who wrote the *Uṣûl al-Araḍîn* which regulated urban form, as well as the remarkable irrigation system based on the occasional flash floods of the Shabka, so that the five settlements cultivate some 1,000 ha of palms (p.426) through ingenious systems of ground-water storage and distribution.<sup>18</sup> In due course both the parallel institutions of the *ḥalqa* and the qualification of the 'azzâba were developed. One of the main elaborations was that of Abû Ya'qûb al-Warjlâni's friend, Abû 'Ammâr 'Abd al-Kâfi al-Warjlâni (first half of 6/12<sup>th</sup> century), in his *Sîrat al-ḥalqa*, and eventually the term 'azzâba, which originally was the equivalent of 'ulamâ', came more or less to replace that of *ḥalqa*. Similarly, Ammi Sa'id, who had come in 854/1450 from Jerba with two others to settle disputes and organize teaching in the Mzab, made the original *irwân* code the basis of his education system, in which the *irû* learnt the Qur'ân by heart and passed the examination in a continuous all-night recitation, before proceeding to higher studies. Under his guidance a sort of superior council of all the 'azzâba was developed.

Abû 'Abdullâh's original regulation was a fairly small work which really shows the 'azzâba as something of a monastic teaching order made up of two classes, those who command ('*âmir*) and those who obey (*ma'mûr*). The highest authority was the *shaykh* who supervised the purchases, sales, and stocking of supplies and goods from the *awqâf* and adjudged (*ḥakm*) in disputes and delegated specific carefully defined duties to the '*arîf*.<sup>19</sup> This teaching-learning role is emphasized in Darjîni's biography of Abû 'Abdullâh (ii. 380), where the term 'azzâba *talâmidha* is used. It cannot be emphasized too much that Arabic was the language of scholarship and was completely unintelligible to the Berber communities, *a fortiori* after the cosmopolitan centre of Tahert fell and the Ibâḍis scattered to the small oases in the south. Those who could master it were few, and the very root '*zb* has a connotation of someone apart; furthermore, it seems that at one period at least they met not in the mosque, as might be expected, but in cemeteries. In other words, the 'azzâba were the *khâṣṣ*, but they almost formed a class, separated from the '*âmm* not just by their '*ilm* but by mastery of a totally different language and a foreign culture. It also served as a secret language, allowing them to converse or discuss when others around were regarded with suspicion; the Mzab, it should be remembered was never entirely Ibâḍi and today Bani Isguen is the only settlement which is so. But such knowledge was only for the few, the very few. Comparing Arabic and Berber to, say, Latin and French completely understates the differences: western theological scholars might find battling with Hebrew makes a better comparison. In this connection it is interesting to note that the reason why al-Darjîni wrote his *Ṭabaqât al-Mashâ'ikh bi'l-Maghrib*, according to (p.427) al-

---

Barrâdi, was because the standard work until then had been the *K. al-Sîra wa akhbâr al-â imma* of Abû Zakariyyâ' written around the turn of the 5/6<sup>th</sup> century. Darjîni, who had studied the *ḥalqa* in Wargla before settling in Jerba was asked by its 'azzâba to write a work on the Imams and Doctors of the Maghrib, which an emissary from Oman had requested. As Abû Zakariyyâ's work was considered incomplete and not very scholarly because of his imperfect knowledge of Arabic, Darjîni acceded (the book probably dates to the mid-7/13<sup>th</sup> century and it also includes the *Sîrat al-ḥalqa*).

In Abû 'Abdullâh's time the 'azzâba and *irwân* institutions had essentially been geared to furthering 'ilm, but faced with the practical problems arising from the formation of the Pentapolis, the institution became a sort of higher council which met in a circle (*ḥalqa*), making decisions affecting the community as a whole. Deliberations were in Berber but were recorded in Arabic. The first of these *tifâqât* recorded dates to 807/1405 (?), and Sh. Aṭfayyish, according to Ben Moussa, states that he had counted 1,872 up to 1324/1904. Religious learning remains the heart of the *ḥalqa* institution, with three levels, I was told: the *ṭolba*, the *irwân*, and the 'azzâba, that is, the students, those who have passed the first great level of examination (the Qur'ân by rote) and those who have fully qualified. The core institution is made up of the leading 'azzâba with experience in administration and such practical matters as irrigation and the *sûq*. The council of from twelve to sixteen traditionally ran the mosque, prayer, *waqf*, schools, rites, and succession for the dead, conducted external relations, and so on, and it also had at its service a sort of moral police, the *imaṣṣorda*. But it also consulted in a wider body, the *jamâ'a*, which included lay members of the community. Most of the 'azzâba were engaged in earning a living, but this was confined to local crafts and agriculture (*filâḥa*), so that they were readily available. But the Ibâḍis had always been in commerce (*tujjâra*) and the demographic pressure on the resource base of the Mzab was such that, as in the Hadramawt and Oman, external trade was essential to survival. So consultation was required at all levels to deal with regulating the needs of the society at home and to keep those temporarily migrating for work or trade on the straight and narrow, all the more so since most of the commercial intermediaries were outsiders, notably the Arab Chaamba of Metlili, Wargla, and Goléa, and also the Zoua of Insalah.

Demographic pressure and local quarrels also led to founding new settlements. A major collective decision was necessary for Ghardaia and the *jamâ'a* decided not to allow any further settlement upstream. So Berriane (1090/1679) was founded by two sections from Ghardaia, and Guerarra (1039/1630) by the Walad Bakhâ of Ghardaia, in association with a group of Mâlîki Chereufa, both outside the Pentapolis. (p.428) Noteworthy, too, is the fact that the two parties developing Guerrara mutually agreed never to try and convert the other.<sup>20</sup>

#### Comparison with Oman

It is interesting to compare this consultation process with that in Oman. The Mozabite community *siyar* were essentially based on the notion of a universal *ijmâ'*. Although the 'azzâba considered themselves *mujtahids*, they justified associating laic members in the deliberations of the *jamâ'a* in the interest of reaching a consensus between the religious and temporal leaders of the community.<sup>21</sup> In Oman, as I have tried to show in my *Imamate Tradition*, this result was achieved through the wide network of 'ulamâ', who had generally studied with one or two of the main religious leaders, but who lived dispersed through the main centres, or were associated

---



with major tribal groupings. In Oman the emphasis was on supporting the Imamate order or in re-establishing it. Such '*ulamâ*' not only also served as walis and qadis, even when the Imamate was in abeyance, but also had a workaday life, administrating *waqf* (an important source of revenue for them) and settling village and tribal disputes. They were not remote from their congregation. It was through consultation of this '*ulamâ*' class that the Imam was chosen, and it was through them that tribal and factional interests were known and represented. The essential quality in an Imam and his administration was not simply '*ilm*', but *başîra*, the quality the Abû 'Abdullâh had insisted, right back in the time of the First Imamate, was also a *fariða*. The Imamate tradition was geared to the level of the Islamic state. In contrast, that of the *ḥalqa* was developed around small communities in which mutual consultation was a necessity and in which there was no clearly established political precedence.

Similar differences emerged in the notion of *walâya* and *barâ'a*. Abû Ya 'qûb al-Warjlâni emphasizes the spiritual dimension, and considers there are three aspects of *walâya*, agreement on the *sharî'a*, mutual love, and the resulting worthy life. The emphasis in 'Awtabi and Qalhâti is on '*ilm*', the *walâya* accorded the leading Doctors and Imams of the true religion and its related dogma. In the same way, *barâ'a* is essentially about rejecting those who have led the Ibâḍi community astray, who have deposed the just Imams. In the Mzab it often takes the form of *tabriyya*, a punishment of temporary banishment or even full expulsion by the *jamâ'a* for **(p. 429)** those who have transgressed the code of the community; even today those who have offended are ostracized, by not buying, dealing, or talking to them.

#### The closed community: *zuhûr* and *kitmân*

In many ways the approach developed in the Maghrib after the collapse of the Imamate was that of the closed community concerned with preserving standards in order to survive. It was essentially introspective and defensive. They were in *kitmân*, as Shammâkhi (d. 928/1522) tells the Omanis. This term was, of course, not new, but it was developed considerably by Abû Ya 'qûb in his *Dalîl*, as Ben Moussa points out, and it is really now that it becomes a fourth state. And it is significant that for treating *kitmân* the *Muṣannaf* (x. §15) relies mainly on a Maghribi source, Abû 'Ubayda (Nâfi' b. Naşr) al-Maghribi. *Zuhûr* was a condition, the community living openly. But for the North Africans, *zuhûr* is contrasted with *kitmân*, and just as the classification of the two types of Imam (*difâ'i* or *shâri*) was largely a relatively late rationalization, so was the contrast of the two conditions. As Abû 'Abdullâh (Muḥammad b. Maḥbûb) replied when asked, 'When is *zuhûr*?', the truth simply grows on the people and it begins to emerge. Some succeed with forty, others 10,000. In the same way, the Imam emerges. There is no original theory about the Imam and the early Basran Ibâḍis can be scanned in vain for anything on the subject, beyond the pronouncements following the Nukkarite dispute and the general notion that he should '*amr bi'l-ma'rûf*' and that his selection was not confined to Quraysh. All the emphasis was on establishing what the *ma'rûf* was. Virtually everything that is written about the Imamate in Oman results from case history and disputes. So, as the state declines or struggles to reassert itself, the role of the *ḍa'îf*, *pis aller* unqualified 'weak' Imam features; and when there is no Imam at all the community tends to turn to a leading '*âlim*' to adjudicate. So we read of Muḥammad b. Sulaymân al-Bahlawi being appointed to the *ḥukm bayn al-nâs* in the disordered conditions of the fifteenth century, while in Tahert the population placed *ḥâkims* at the head of

---

their groups after the fall of the Rustamid Imam ate. But there was no real theory about their role, and the nearest we get to it in Oman is the idea of the *muhtasib*.

So while it is possible that at Qalhât in Ibn Baṭṭuta's time the Ibâḍis could not go about openly professing their religious beliefs, we must ask ourselves what did that really mean? So long as one behaved as a good Muslim, conformed to the rules of *taqiyya* and the degree of cooperation and latitude permitted in dealing with the *jabâbira* (which included praying in their mosques), one was still a good Ibâḍi. Such relations depended on where you were living, but there was never a persecution of Ibâḍis as such in Oman. As al-Sâlimi states *apropos* Ibn Baṭṭûta: 'it is true that **(p.430)** outsiders have occasionally gained control of parts of the country and made their *madhhabs* dominant, but we know of no time in Oman when the Ibâḍis could not practice (*iẓhâr*) their *madhhab* there.'<sup>22</sup> So *zuhûr* was a relative term.

In fact, Abû Ya'qûb was not really describing the condition in the Maghrib when he contrasted *zuhûr* with *kitmân*, for the Ibâḍis continued to live quietly in an open state of professing their faith in certain regions. What he was really trying to do was rationalize and periodize the state of the Imamate, which was never restored anywhere except in Oman. So for the Maghribis *zuhûr* was first exemplified by Abû Bakr and 'Umar, *difa'* by 'Abdullâh b. Wahb al-Râsibi, *shirâ'* by Abû Bilâl, and *kitmân* by Jâbir b. Zayd and Abû 'Ubayda.<sup>23</sup> It was this notion of four states that became the model for Ibâḍi history and gradually took hold in Oman also, resulting in unfortunate misconceptions about the structure of the original Ibâḍi community in Basra. The original Ibâḍis in fact formed a sort of *ḥalqa*, a community itself made up of various *majlises*, which discussed, argued, and finally agreed. It may have recognized the pre-eminence of certain members in *fiqh*, theology, or indeed in organizing *shirâ'* (notably Ḥâjib and al-Rabî'), and discussion may have taken a 'Collegiate' form with a sort of president, but none was ever an *imâm* (at least in other than prayer), and the idea that there was a secret Imam in *kitmân* distorts the essential quality of the school, the consensual view that forms the essential characteristic both of *walâya* and the *âthâr* of the community. So even when the Imamate was established, the Imam was never more than a first amongst equals, subject to correction in matters of interpretation of '*ilm*.

### Closed and Open Scholarship: Abû Ya'qûb Yûsuf Al-warjîlânî

This closed community characteristic that developed in the Maghrib was reflected also in the approach to scholarship. To preserve the purity of their legacy, the *irwân* were forbidden by the '*azzâba* to read anything other than Ibâḍi authors. Anyone who looked outside was frowned upon (*karah*), which is why the distinguished 6/12<sup>th</sup>-century scholar Ibn Kha-lfûn (Abû Ya'qûb Yûsuf b. Khal-fûn al-Mazâti), author of the famous *Ajwibat Ibn Khal-fûn*, was excommunicated for reading works like the *K. al-Ishrâf 'alâ Masâ'il al-Khilâf*, the very work which in Oman Abû Sa'îd **(p.431)** al-Kudami had written a critique of a century-and-a-half before.<sup>24</sup> And as we shall see, it is this selfsame Ibn Khal-fûn who first refers to the *Âthâr* of al-Rabî', albeit designating the work as *K. Abi Şufra ('an al-Rabî' 'an Jâbir b. Zayd)*.

The alternative approach was that of Abû Ya'qûb, like Qalhâti in Oman: put one's own house in order and then join battle with the opposition. Abû Ya'qûb, Darjîni emphasizes, was widely read in the whole gamut of jurisprudence and theology, including an expertise in *ḥadith* and *akhbâr*.

---

He had also travelled extensively and studied at Cordoba, so was used to discoursing with others. His Qur'ânic commentaries demonstrate his ability in *tafsîr*, while his *K. al- 'Adl wa'l-inṣâf* was a major work of jurisprudence, that Shammâkhi summarized in a *Mukhtaṣar*. His great work (also much quoted by Shammâkhi), the *Dalîl wa'l-Burhân*, is essentially concerned with the wider aspects of theological debate. It too largely treats of the four great problems of Islamic theology identified by Shahrastâni; *tawhîd wa'l-'adl* (i.e. the disputes that arose from debating God's unique nature and the concept of his justice), *wa' d wa'l-wa 'îd* (God's reward and punishment), *al-sam' wa'l- 'aql* (revealed law and human interpretation), but unlike earlier debates Abû Ya' qûb is particularly concerned to counter Ash'arite and Sunni views, as well as treating the problems debated by the Ibâḍis themselves. Abû Ya' qûb was not an isolated figure; rather, perhaps, the outcome of the wide interest in theological problems that was characteristic of his age. As we saw in Chapter 6 when discussing the *K. Abi Sufyân*, this 'revival' seems to have developed among the Nafûsan North African Ibâḍis in the wake of Abû 'Abdullâh Muḥammad b. Bakr, the man responsible for codifying the *ḥalqa* and *irwâ n*. One of his pupils, Abû l-Rabî' Sulaymân b. Yakhlaf (d. 471/1079, i.e. just 100 years before Abû Ya' qûb), instituted a *ḥalqa* in the Jabal Nafûsa that was particularly influential, and his own pupils included Abû 'Abdullâh's own son, Abû'l-Abbâs Aḥmad. It was now that theological works really blossomed, including two by Abû'l-Rabî' himself. Amongst those prominent in the Wargla-Wadi Righ area was the highly regarded Abû 'Ammâr 'Abd al-Kâfi, with whom the younger Abû Ya' qûb made the Pilgrimage. He too was a polymath but with a specialization in *kalâm*; his *K. al-Mujîz* is largely concerned with refuting heresies.

It was also the period when the '*aqîda* becomes characteristic, a sort of profession of faith which is not really found in Oman until relatively modern times. Documents attesting theological views had, of course, existed from the start, and it is difficult to define exactly what may be termed an '*aqîda*; but its essential characteristic seems to be a holistic approach to expressing the faith. Since the genre is essentially Maghribi (**p.432**) and only really develops from the end of our period, it is not intended to discuss it further here, particularly as Cuperly (1984) has dealt with and analysed the most important examples in his masterly work on the subject.

#### *Ibâḍi ḥadîth*

But from the point of view of directly confronting the Sunni schools one piece was missing from Abû Ya' qûb's armoury: there were no Ibâḍi *ḥadîth*, for those that existed had been absorbed by general consensus in the *âthâr*. If, therefore, like was to be answered by like in theological-judicial debate with the Sunni schools, then it was necessary to align those *âthâr* with the criteria used for *ḥadîth* analysis in the great Sunni collections. In any case, since the Ibâḍis were now using *ḥadîth* they might as well have their own collection. Arranging all these *âthâr* and rationalizing *fatâwa* whose *matn* differed little, if at all, from standard Sunni *fiqh*, would have been of little difficulty for a scholar of Abû Ya' qûb's broad knowledge. On the other hand, the *sine qua non* was that it should not appear to be derivative from the Sunni collections, but from the teacher line that had by now been established, with the concentration on al-Rabî' and Abû 'Ubayda, and through them Jâbir b. Zayd and so back to Ibn 'Abbâs and his network, plus any other sources they might have tapped. That is the process, I believe which led Abû Ya' qûb to 'arrange' (*tartîb*) al-Rabî''s work as part of a *ḥadîth* collection.

So what were his sources apart from the Sunni ones? There seem to be three blocs of al-Rabî' material, the *âthâr*, his *futyâ*, and what was recorded by his students in the *Mudawwana*. In addition, there is the mysterious *Dîwân* of Jâbir b. Zayd, supposedly recorded by himself and a copy of which was said once to have existed in Hârûn al-Rashîd's library. The North African sources conveniently claim that a copy was passed down to Abû 'Ubayda, thence to al-Rabî', then to Abû Sufyân, and finally to his son Abû 'Abdullâh. From this a further copy is said to have been brought to the Maghrib by the Nafûsan Naffâth b. Abi Yûnis, who destroyed it when in rebellion against the Rustamids, but there is an implication his brother, who had been Aflâh's governor of Qantrâra, had copied it. Needless to say, there is absolutely no trace of such a story in Oman or in anything Abû 'Abdullâh ever wrote, and it is another example of how material apparently essential for developing the *madhhab*, but unknown in Oman, supposedly found itself preserved in the Maghrib. On the other hand, we have already seen (in Chapter 6) that collections of Jâbir's opinions were set down by some of his pupils or transmitted from them, even though, as was traditional in his age, Jâbir disliked having his judgements recorded in writing.

**(p.433)** Al-Rabî' collected *Âthâr* and *Fatâwa*, like that of his students recorded in the *Mudawwana*, was another assemblage also uniquely preserved in the Maghrib. The *Âthâr* first surfaced in the work of Ibn Khalfûn, who quotes important sections of what he calls the *K. Abi Şufra* in a form identical with the manuscripts of the *Âthâr*. Kharusi (2003) considers the *Fatâwa* as a quite separate work, and it is true that the former concentrate on Jâbir and the latter on al-Rabî's own opinions, but I find they merge rather more than he states. And if Abû Şufra was not the source for the *Fatâwa*, who was? Abû Ghânim? However, it does not matter much, since neither is a *ḥadîth* collection. We also learn from Darjîni and Shammâkhi that Abû Muḥammad 'Abdullâh b. Muḥammad al-Lawâti (432–528/1134), concerned with spreading understanding of the basic Arab works to the Berber-speaking population, used the text of al-Rabî' b. Ḥabîb's *Âthâr* in one particular session.<sup>25</sup> Shammâkhi significantly also tells us that Abû Şufra related al-Rabî's *Âthâr* from Ḍumâm from Jâbir, but says he does not know who related the *K. Musnad 'an Abû 'Ubayda*, called *K. al-Rabî'*, but quite possibly Abû Şufra also. Darjîni also mentions the *Musnad*, but his statement does not derive from the *K. Abi Sufyân* which is his main source for al-Rabî's biography. Al-Barrâdi simply states there is a book called *Ḥadîth al-Rabî'*, but says that this is not the same as Abû Ya'qûb's arrangement; a tantalizing piece of information that poses more questions than it answers. I suspect, if true, it was an early first essay. All these references by these late Maghribi authors do is confirm what we know, that the *Âthâr* are different from the *Musnad*.

So neither the *Âthâr* nor the *Fatâwa* are *ḥadîth*, nor in any way resemble them, anymore than the opinions in Jâbir's correspondence. They are *ra'y*, judicial opinions, still very much on the early *lâ bâs* lines, or of indicating what the right Islamic practice was, which generally characterized all early *fiqh*, whether Ibâḍi or other. Abû Ya'qûb would also have had access to the other material from Jâbir, possibly his correspondence and that found in various version of the *Dîwân al-Ma'rûḍ*. In addition to the material discussed in Chapter 6 (the *Aqwâl Qatâda*), Ennami mentions Abû 'Ubayda's *zakât* treatise, and two works by his heretic pupils, 'Abdullâh b. 'Abd al-'Azîz relating from Abû Nûḥ and Abû 'Ubayda on marriage and divorce, and Abû al-Muarrij

---

relating from Abû Ubayda on fasting. From Kharusi's study of the Egyptian manuscript (Dâr al-Kutub B/21582), entitled *Mudawwanat Abi Ghânim al-Khurâsânî*, which also includes the *Âthâr* of al-Rabî', it is fairly clear that part at least of the material derives from the supposed author of the *Mudawwana*. Unfortunately, I (like Kharusi) have only seen the Rabî' section of the (p.434) 1191/1777 manuscript Ennami used,<sup>26</sup> but the fact that at the end of other treatises which are found both in the Egyptian copy and the *Dîwân al-Marûd* (including material from authorities of Basra, Kûfa, Madina, and Mecca) comes a statement that it is 'of the opinion of the Kûfans shown to Ibâdi scholars' lends strength to my view that part at least of the *Dîwân al-Ma rûd* could be a Nukkarite work, the Kûfans being essentially the followers of 'Abdullâh b. Yazîd al-Fazâri, to whom some attribute authorship of the *Mudawwana* (cf. Chapter 12).

However that may be, we can assume that all these sources were available to Abû Ya'qûb, along with much other material extant in his time. Amongst works specifically mentioned is the *K. Abi Sufyân*,<sup>27</sup> which means he probably had a great deal more than what we now only know from citations in much later sources. From the point of view of creating *hadîth*, the essential element apparently revealed by that work is that Abû 'Ubayda was Jâbir's successor as leader of the Ibâdis. True, Ibn Sallâm is a little more nuanced, saying he is the most important *faqîh* after Jâbir from whom he transmitted. Yet the *Âthâr* show that al-Rabî' was transmitting from Jâbir via ʾDumâm. That must have been awkward for Abû Ya'qûb, who certainly knew of the so-called *K. Dumâm*. True, Abû 'Ubayda was earlier than his pupil al-Rabî', but ʾDumâm was a complication who did not fit into the neat order required. So to keep the *sanad* short and avoid complications, Abû 'Ubayda becomes the main transmitter and only three transmissions in Abû Ya'qûb's 'arrangement' or 're-presentation' originate from ʾDumâm.<sup>28</sup> Moving further up towards origins: since it was well established that Jâbir knew Ibn 'Abbâs, it stands to reason that he would have milked this Qur'ânic expert. (Even though he was only 10 to 15 years old when the Prophet died, he is accepted as a commentator, although there is some dispute over exactly how many actual *hadîth* he directly transmitted.) So it is logical to presume that the *matn* recorded in the Sunni collections must also have been available to the Ibâdis. Hence, according apparently to al-Rabî' himself when summarizing at the end of Part II of the *Musnad*, there are 150 Ibn 'Abbâs traditions back to the Prophet (= *marfû'*, though he does not use the term), plus another 184 *marâsîl* (which he does), virtually all with the *sanad* Abû 'Ubayda ‹ Jâbir. Al-Rabî' also kindly reminds his readers that Ibn 'Abbâs died in 68, in Mâlik b. Marwân's time, aged 72, which puts him at the high end of his supposed age range. In addition to his (p.435) transmissions which form the basis of the *hadîth* collection, there are Abû 'Ubayda's own eighty-eight *marâsîl*. It is interesting to observe this use of the technical term *marâsîl* by a man who died in the 170s, a quarter-of-a-century and more before the birth of Bukhâri in 194 and Muslim a decade later still! *A fortiori* since also attributed to al-Rabî' is a statement that 'we learn' (*balaghanâ*; from whom?) that there are 4,000 *hadîth*, 600 in *uṣûl*, the rest in *adâb* and *akhbâr*, transmitted from 900 men and one woman, 'Â'isha. Curious that none of the great standard collections are aware of al-Rabî' as a *hadîth* source.

But to continue with the probable underlying logic of Abû Ya'qûb's arrangement. Since Anas b. Mâlik was a Companion and contemporary of Jâbir in Basra, there is no problem in lifting another forty *marfû'* traditions from him. Since 'Â'isha was a confidant of both Ibn 'Abbâs and

Jâbir another sixty-eight can safely be taken from her. Abû Hurayra was so prolific (nearly 4,000 *ḥadīth*) that there is no problem in adding a bloc of seventy-two from him. Abû Sa'îd al-Khudri (d. 74) is nice and late so no problem about him either, but the prolific 'Abdullâh b. 'Urnar, who was Madinan, must be avoided, and of course Abû Ya'qub would never fall for the sort of careless anachronisms that made 'Awtabi imagine that Jâbir could have recorded from the Caliph 'Umar! So we have, again apparently according to al-Rabî', 654 *ḥadīth* in these two first parts (in fact 742). Add, in the next sections, the transmissions that al-Rabî' himself collected from others, including a neat set of supposedly Khâriji traditions about the Imamate, throw in a few more from post-al-Rabî' sources, notably Abû Sufyân, plus a *ziyâda* from the Imam Aflâh who recorded them from Abû Ghânim and bingo: 1005 *ḥadīth*. The *Jâmi' al-Ṣaḥīh* of the Ibâḍis.

This collection is in fact redundant, an irrelevancy, and has served the Ibâḍis poorly. Looking through the footnotes of a recent edition<sup>29</sup> which shows where the parallel material is found in the standard sources, it is all there, all, with a certain predilection for Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad*. It is, frankly, a fake. The Ibâḍis did not operate by *ḥadīth*, nor did they do so post-Abû Ya'qub until the *nahḍa*. It first attracted attention, once again in the Maghrib, in the *Ḥawâshi al-tartīb* by Abû Sa'îd al-Qaṣabi (d. 1088/1677), which was re-presented in a *Mukhtaṣar* by 'Abd al-'Azîz al-Thamîni (1130-1223/1718-1808), the leading pupil of 'Ammi Yaḥyâ (d. 1226/1811), known as *Abû'l-nahḍa*. He incorporated it in the 'bible' of the renaissance in the Maghrib, the *K. al-Nîl*, which in turn was re-expanded in a huge commentary by Muḥammad b. Yûsuf Aṭṭayyish (1236-1332/1820-1914), who sent his young contemporary, 'Abdullâh b. Ḥumayd al-Sâlimi (1868-1914), a copy of the Maghribi manuscript, (p.436) which he compared with those available in Oman (all deriving from a copy that probably arrived in the late Ya'âruba period<sup>30</sup>). This al-Sâlimi edited with an extensive *Sharḥ*, while his Maghribi opposite number added a *Tartīb* of the *Tartīb*, as well as a major commentary on the *Mudawwana*.

All of which served the *nahḍa*, a *retour aux sources* that characterized the *salafiyya* movements of the period and with which the Ibâḍis attempted a limited *rapprochement*. Thus al-Qaṣabi's version was one of the first manuscripts published by the Barghash press in Zanzibar, so that, along with the work of Aṭṭayyish and al-Sâlimi, the Ibâḍis could stand up with the others and be counted. So, al-Sâlimi proclaimed,<sup>31</sup> al-Rabî''s work was the first book after the Qur'ân, to which Aṭṭayyish added,<sup>32</sup> 'the truest *ḥadīth* are those related by al-Rabî' b. Ḥabîb from Abû 'Ubayda from Jâbir b. Zayd from a Companion from the Prophet', followed in descending order, in the Ibâḍi view, by al-Bukhâri and Muslim, both of whom are above the *Muwaṭṭa'* of Mâlik.

Splendid! But unlike the Sunni collections, which were formative, the Ibâḍis in the early years never quoted *ḥadīth* at all, at least not in Oman, and when they did they were as adjuncts without *isnâds*. And even in the Maghrib, Hûd's *Tafsîr* shows that they were quoted indirectly from other works and also without *isnâd*. So by the time this *ḥadīth* collection appeared in the 6/12<sup>th</sup> century, the Ibâḍi *madhhab* was complete in its essentials and all it did was to rationalize *ex post facto* some of its *âthâr*. Ibâḍism had followed its own line of development from the earliest days, and the extant texts show an originality that would have been better preserved without the attempt at normalization. Even today, little reference is made to the Ibâḍi version of *ḥadīth* and the commentary in modern editions on old works normally refer to the standard

---

Sunni collections. It has never convinced. On the contrary, it has tended to discredit and led the Ibâḍīs to be known in the Maghrib as the 'fifthers'.

### Normalization

Unfortunately, this intensification of madhhabization that developed from the 5/11<sup>th</sup> to the 6/12<sup>th</sup> centuries became the basis of a neo-Ibâḍism, of immense scholarship it is true, but which nevertheless calqued itself on the norms of Sunnism. Francesca (2002) illustrates this process perfectly. The early Madinese recognized that minted coins represented a higher value than unworked gold and therefore allowed repayment by a larger weight than that represented by the coins. This was considered a serious (p.437) infringement of *al-ribâ fî'l-nasî'a* (a credit usury) by the Sunnis. Its practice was nevertheless recognized as fair by the Ibâḍīs, and by the time of Ibn Baraka, who knew his Sunni sources, he continued to permit it on the grounds that the Sunnis had deliberately rejected the relevant *ḥadīth* related by Ibn 'Abbâs from Usâma b. Zayd. That view prevailed until Muḥammad Aṭfayyish (d. 1914) overruled the Ibâḍī tradition by citing Sunni sources to show that Ibn Abbâs had subsequently repented of his opinion!

So, in the process of madhhabization based on Sunni norms the model of historical evolution and rationalization of origins in Basra as given by the Maghribis (partly based on the so-called *K. Abi Sufyân*) became a straitjacket into which the much more fluid and flexible evolution in Oman has now been forced in order to explain its own origins. Fortunately, the norms of Sunni scholarship did not impose themselves on Oman until relatively recent times. In all the period following that dealt with in this book, and right on through to Ya 'âruba times, the extant material indicates that the Ibâḍī 'ulamâ' continued making their decisions based on the *âthâr* and the pragmatic interpretations necessary to deal with both changing political circumstances and day-to-day matters; there is no indication that they considered the gates of *ijtihâd* closed. So Abû Bakr Aḥmad b. Maddâd in the sixteenth century and Ibn 'Ubaydân in the Ya 'âruba period say of the nine *Jawâmi'* and the likes of the *Bayân al-Shar'*, the *Muṣannaf*, the *Ḍiyâ'*, and so on that they must be verified through the consensus of the current 'ulamâ' over any disputes concerning God's Book and the *sunna* of his Prophet (note, the concept that *sunna* was that of the Prophet has stuck). Even an illegal regime (*umma sawda*) could be right and an Ibâḍī wrong, so long as judgement was based on these three criteria. Furthermore, Ibn 'Ubaydân insists, all this material must be treated with intelligence ('*aql*), for the *sharî'a* cannot be understood without intelligence. And he also divides *walâya* and *barâ'a* into *sharîṭa* and *ra'y* forms, with the implication that many of the old disputes that had divided the Rustâq and Nizwâ parties were opinion and not fundamental conditions. Good, common sense prevailed.

*Ḥadīth* scholarship had never been part of the living and evolving Ibâḍī tradition in Oman. It may form a stage on which to display the pyrotechnics of recent scholarship, but it is not integral to the essential characteristics of Ibâḍism. From the start, it was about the consensus that guided the interpretation of God's Book and the conduct of its community and institutions. It passed down the generations, but it was for the existing generation to decide its application under the circumstances prevailing at the time. Long may this tradition continue.

### Notes:

(1) 1950: 2-3.

- (2) Rubinacci 1964 and Cuperly 1984.
- (3) Cf. collected articles in *Variorum* (Ashgate), 1996.
- (4) Details in Juynboll's *Excursus*, loc. cit.
- (5) Ibn Baraka does use the term, but only in a very general way to designate certain major divisions in Islam.
- (6) Assuming that the commentary in the BL Or. 2434 is by him (e.g. 108r where he writes of the *Âl Ruḥayl* and says that Sayf b. Hubayra was one of the Prophet's *farsân*).
- (7) 1979 with revisions as ch. 4 of Cuperly 1984.
- (8) Even after the civil war we still see al-Bisyâni (*Kâshif* edn., ii. 164) selecting for special damnation the *dîns* of the Qadariyya, Murjî'a, and the Azâriqa, the three *bêtes noires* of the Ibâḍis from the earliest times.
- (9) Cf. Madelung 1970; Kohlberg 1976.
- (10) For residual differences see Smogorzewski 1919.
- (11) Cf. *EI1*, *Sîrâf*.
- (12) *Aqâlim*, 37 and 96. Amongst the sects he says that the Ibâḍiyya had fallen into obscurity (he was writing post the civil war).
- (13) q.v. in *EI2* (Schacht).
- (14) See Cook 2000: 410.
- (15) Cf. the summary of the relation between the Khawârij and 'Ali made by Muḥammad b. Kfafi in *Bull. Fac. Arts* (Cairo), 14:1 (1952), 29–48.
- (16) This is an attempted synthesis from a large number of sources and studies already quoted for the most part, and only cited here for certain specifics. But a great deal is also to be learnt from some of the earliest writings following the French occupation in 1882, even though the Ibâḍi leaders did their best not to cooperate, and these I have footnoted as appropriate. To this I can add my own field-work in 1977, when I found the *shaykh* and 'azzâba at Beni Isguen most helpful, as too the Pères Blancs. I have made little attempt to transliterate names, which in any case are largely Arabizations of Berber words.
- (17) Cf. Wilkinson 1987: 233 and n. 10; Ben Moussa 1971.
- (18) Cf. Amat 1888, Charlet 1905, and Féliu 1909. For urban aspects see Cuperly 1981, 1987, and 1988 in Custers 2006: vol. iii.
- (19) Cf. Grossmann 1976.



(20) Motylinski 1885. Once again, Guerara's founding starts with a group of 40 (Walad Bakhâ) who went to the Tell where they saved enough money to buy material for the new settlement. The mutual formal agreement with the Cheurefa also stipulated that the Bakhâ would always consult them over any important decision, while they in turn promised never to side with their enemies.

(21) Milliot 1930.

(22) For further details see Wilkinson 1987: 155-62.

(23) Cf. al-Jannâwuni, *K. al-Waḍ'* (text 92-3; Rubinacci 1964: 591): also Schwartz 1983: 66-70 and compare with 263-6.

(24) Cf. Darjîni, ii. 496, and Ben Moussa 1971: 240 for further examples.

(25) Lewicki 1961.

(26) I deposited the photocopy kindly given my by Dr Werner Schwartz in Exeter University Library and it was this that Kharusi used. The content of the complete work is given by Custers 2006: i. 39.

(27) Ennami 1971: 149 based on Sulaymân b. Yakhlaf al-Mazâti. But if this author did die in 471 then this remark is a gloss.

(28) Cf. Kharusi 1971.

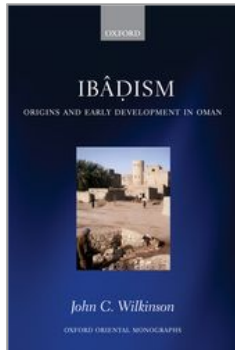
(29) Ed. Muḥammad Idrîs and 'Âshûr b. Yûsuf (1995).

(30) There is, incidentally, a copy in Ibn Ruzayq's *SQ*.

(31) In *Luma`a*

(32) *Wifâ'* i. 7.

University Press Scholarship Online  
**Oxford Scholarship Online**



## Ibâdism: Origins and Early Development in Oman

John C. Wilkinson

Print publication date: 2010

Print ISBN-13: 9780199588268

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2011

DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.001.0001

### (p.457) General Index

Arabic terminology will normally be found in a separate Index (exceptions *falaj*, *hadîth*, 'ulamâ') or anglicised (e.g. Hajj, Imam).

1. Subject headings (e.g. navy) refer to Oman, unless otherwise stated.
2. Tribal and family names are normally classified under the main name, not Âl, Awlad, Bani, etc.; exceptions Âl Bû, Umbû.
3. Individuals are normally classified under the family *nisba* or as Abû or Ibn Fulân; exceptions being names of Imams which will be found under that heading and sub-classified by region; and major dynasties e.g. Umayyads, 'Abbasids
4. Titles of Arabic works discussed will generally be found under author: the *Mudawwana* and the *K. al-Taqyîd* have their own entry, as too the literary forms, *siyar*, *jawâmi* and *tafsîr*
5. Only discussion of views by authors writing in European languages with direct relevance to Ibâdism are included.

al-'Abbâs Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Bakr 306

'Abbâsids (for invasions of Oman *see under* Imams (Omani) Julandâ b. Masûd and al-Şalt b. Mâlik, deposing of)

Abû'l-'Abbâs al-Saffâḥ 212, 215, 348

Hârûn al-Rashîd 257, 432

Ma'mûn 63, 274-5

Manşûr (Abû Ja'far) 15, 152, 159, 183, 211-12

Muqtadir 330, 333

Mu'tadid 280, 328-9

Mu'tamid 280

al-Mutawakkil 275, 280

Others 329-30, 346, 400

- 'Abd al-Qays/'Abdi 2, 12-13, 15, 45-6, 71, 80, 94, 97, 146, 148, 157-8, 266, 326-7, 397, *see also*; Basra
- 'Abd al-Rahmân b. 'Awf 255, 258-9, 281
- 'Abdullâh b. 'Abd al-'Azîz 227, 229, 231-2, 387, 433, *see also*; *Mudawwana*
- 'Abdullâh b. (Abû 'Abdullâh) Muḥammad b. Maḥbûb 172 n. 25, 326, 337, 368
- 'Abdullâh b. Ibâḍ, *see* Ibn Ibâḍ
- 'Abdullâh b. al-Şaffâr, *see* Şufrîs
- 'Abdullâh b. Wahb al-Râsîbî 139-41, 153, 259, 337, 430
- 'Abdullâh b. Yahyâ al-Kindî (*Tâlib al-Ḥaqq*, Imam) 124, 172, 176, 180-1, 213, 259  
 revolt and Imamate of ix, 3, 170, 175, 177-83, 210, 369
- 'Abdullâh b. Yazîd al-Fazâri 140, 229, 231, 269-70, 276, 283, 387
- Abraha 15-16, 57
- Abû 'Abdullâh Muḥammad b. Bakr and son Abû'l-'Abbâs Aḥmad 219, 424-6, 431
- Abû 'Abdullâh Muḥammad b. Maḥbûb b. al-Ruḥayl ix, xiii, xxxii, xxxvi, 221, 371  
 advisory role with non-Omani Ibâḥîs 255, 284-7, 341, 367  
 arrival in Oman and relations with Omani 'ulamâ' 264-5, 269-72, 283-4, 287, 290  
 as jurist 266, 287-96, 304, 364, 375, 429  
 as qadi of Sohar 265, 271, 293, 295-6  
 role in created Qur'ân debate, *see* Qur'ân  
 theological views 132, 134
- Abû 'Ali al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad 351, 356, 379
- Abû Ammâr 'Abd al-Kâfi 162, 426, 431
- Abû Ayyûb Wâ'il b. Ayyûb al-Ḥaḍramî (Basran 'Imam') 133 n. 17, 163, 165, 182, 217, 220, 222, 228, 231, 254, 269, 271, 367
- Abû Bakr 54, 127, 207, 230, 258, 362  
 Caliphate of 23, 76, 78, 86-7, 430
- Abû Bilâl Mirdas b. Udayya xi, 97, 100, 136, 143-5, 149-50, 169-70, 176, 186, 236, 365, 369, 430
- Abû'l-Faḍl 'Isâ b. Fûrât 131
- Abû Fudayk 149
- Abû Ghânim Bîshr b. Ghânim al-Khurâsâni 381, 433, 435  
 as author of *al-Mudawwana* (also qv) 190, 386-7, 433-4
- Abû'l-Ḥamza al-Mukhtâr b. 'Awf 142, 170, 176, 179-82
- (p.458)** Abû Ḥanîfa/Ḥanîfîtes 218, 272, 274, 374, 422
- Abû'l-Ḥasan al-Bisyâni/Bisyawi xxxii, 135, 192-3, 203 n. 84, 205, 231-2, 254-5, 257, 262-3, 335-6, 339, 341-3, 345-7, 354, 362-5, 367-8, 370, 374-5, 390-1, 393
- Abû'l-Ḥawâri Muḥammad b. al-Ḥawâri 131-2, 213-14, 246, 264, 293-5, 310, 321, 326, 337, 342, 359, 368, 372, 375
- Abû'l-Ḥurr 'Ali b. al-Ḥusayn 163, 171, 175, 200, 374
- Abû Hurayra 184, 435
- Abû Mâlik Ghassân b. Abdullâh b. al-Khiḍr xxxii, 326, 337, 339
- Abû'l-Mu'arrij 'Umar al Sadûsi 227-9, 231-2, 387, 433, *see also*; *Mudawwana*
- Abû Muḥammad al-Nahdi 132-3, 173-4, 286

- Abû'l-Mu'thir al-Şalt b. Khamîs al-Kharûşî xxxii, 83, 133-4, 154, 224-5, 255, 265, 276-8, 295, 321-6, 332, 335, 337, 340, 368, 372-3, 393
- Abû Mûsâ al-Ash'ari 93-4, 99, 138
- Abû Nûh Şâlih al-Dahhân xii, 65, 163, 166-8, 172, 176, 178, 188, 190, 374, 418, 433
- Abû Qaḥṭân Khâlîd b. Qaḥṭân xxxii, 132, 186, 203-4, 258-60, 295, 321, 325-6, 336-7, 340, 372
- Abû'l-Rabî 'Sulaymân b. Yakhlaf al-Mazâti 162, 431
- Abû Sa'îd al-Khudri 184, 435
- Abû Sa'îd al-Kudami xiv, xxxi, 142-3, 288-9, 294, 308-9, 317, 332, 335-8, 342-3, 346, 372-3, 376, 388, 415, 430-1
- Abû Şufra Mâlik b. Şufra 153 n. 57, 163-4, 189-90, 273-4, 374, 381, 386-8, 418-19, 431, 433
- Abû Sufyân Maḥbûb b. al-Ruḥayl (Basran 'Imam') ix, 128, 163-5, 193-4, 213, 231-4, 269-70, 273, 369, 380, 418, 435
- K. *Abi Sufyân* xii, 132, 144, 151, 153 n. 57, 161-5, 175, 187, 200, 374, 388, 417, 420
- Abû 'Ubayda Muslim b. Abi Karîma (Basran 'Imam') ix, xii, 65, 152-3, 161-2, 166-77, 183-4, 186-7, 216-18, 220-5, 228, 231-4, 238, 242, 296, 380, 394, 417-19, 430, 432-5
- Abû 'Ubayda (al-Şaghîr) 'Abdullâh b. Qâsim 176, 180
- Abû Ya'qûb Yûsuf b. Ibrâhîm al-Warjlâni *see* Warjlâni
- Abû Yazîd Makhlad b. Kaydâd (*şâhib al-ḥimâr*) 231, 385
- Abû Zakariyyâ' Yahyâ (Maghribi, *K.al-Siyar*) 151, 162, 427
- Abû Zakariyyâ' Yahya b. Sa'îd 349-51, 356-7, 378
- Abû Ziyâd al-Waḍḍâh b. 'Uqba and family 237 n. 77, 262 n. 32, 264, 271-2, 293
- Abyssinia/Axum/Ethiopia 55, 57-8, 300-2
- Achaemenids 38-9
- 'Dâra b. Dâra' 26, 37-9
- Adam (place) 246, 263, 353
- Aden 42, 268, 295, 298-9, 404, 411
- 'Adi b. Artât al-Fazâri 120
- 'Adnân 7, 12, 18
- Aghlabids 239-40, 384
- Agriculture (general) 196, 311, 314-6, *see also under*; dates, *falaj*, land tenure, livestock herding, peasants
- irrigation (general), *otherwise see falaj* 196, 305-7, 314-15
- Aḥmad b. Hilâl (Khalîl) 329-30, 333
- Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Şâlih and family 359, 379, 409, 423
- al-Aḥnaf b. Qays (Tamîmi) 97, 103-4, 106-7, 109, 137-8, 143, 156, 195
- Ahwâz 1, 91, 108-11, 144-7, 333
- 'A'isha (bt. Abi Bakr), *see also*; Camel, battle of 2-3, 96-8, 125, 184, 186, 393, 435
- Ajârida 228
- Âl Bu Sa'îd 48, 363
- al-'Alâ al-Ḥaḍrami 74, 91
- alcohol 374-5
- 'Ali ix, 84, 124-5, 129-30, 258-9, 421
- Caliphate of (general) 1-2, 14, 23, 88-9, 96-8, 136-43, 188, 369
-

- 'Ali (b. Sawda, Bani) 9, 245-6
- Al-Salmi (al-Sâlimi), 'A-R. xxxii, xxxiv, 145, 217, 224, 263, 272, 296, 333 n.20, 348, 351, 366, 377, 391
- 'Âmir Rabîa/Şa şa a 6, 13, 16-18, 45-6, 48  
 arrival in Oman xiv, 395-8
- 'Amq and Wadi Sahtân xxvii, 51-2, 248, 324
- 'Amr b. 'Âş 72-5, 77, 86, 136-8
- 'Amr b. Dînâr 187, 190
- 'Amrûs b. al-Fatḥ 151, 236, 381, 389
- Anas b. Mâlik 166-7, 184-5, 388, 417-18, 435
- Andalus/Cordoba/Spain 42, 83, 151, 227, 270, 383, 381, 384-5, 387, 431
- anthropomorphism/tashbfh 227-8, 274
- apostasy (*ridda*) wars 23, 53, 64, 68-9, 77-86, 95, 112, 146
- Arabs, *see also under*; tribes for genealogy; for Arab migration to Oman, *see* Oman  
 (p.459) Arabization of eastern Arabia in 5th century AD 49, *see also*; individual tribes  
 northern and southern divisions of tribes xi, 7, 11-18, 22-3, 68, 116
- al-'Arûḍ xxv, 48, 50
- al-Aşamm (Abû Bakr 'Abd al-Raḥmân b. Kaysân) 281-2
- al-Aşamm (Abû Muḥammad 'Uthmân b. Abi 'Abdullâh) 339, 409
- Asâwira 59-60, 101-2, 106-8, 147
- al-Ash'ari 222, 224, 277-8, 288, *see also*; Sunnis
- al-Ash'ath b. Qays (al-Kindi) 23, 37, 50, 52-4, 76-8, 95, 116, 137-40
- Aţfayyish/Iţfiyyash (Muḥammed b. Yûsuf) 227 n.41, 280-1, 387, 435-7
- 'Atîk ('Imrân clan) 10-11, 47, 76, 92-3, 110-11, 249, 324-5, 327, 399, *see also*; Basra,  
 leadership in, Nabâhina, Muhallabids  
 as place name 243-4, 332
- al-'Awâbi (ancient al-Sawni) xxvii, 52-3, 248, 351, 396
- al-'Awtabi, Salma b. Muslim x, xiv, xxv, 47, 202, 321, 229, 321, 324, 389-94  
 role in developing Ibâḍism as a *madhhab* 392-4, 413-21  
*Ansâb* xxxii, xxxv, 31, 37-8, 59, 243, 389-92  
*Ḍiyâ'* xxxii, xxxv, 133-4, 156, 209, 232, 250, 389-92, 437
- al-Azâriqa ix-xi, 32, 44, 63, 98, 108-10, 122, 131, 142, 148, 153, 155, 158
- Azd xi, 2-4, 11, chapter 1, 48, 65, 76-7, 124, 313, 326, *see also under*; Yaman and Nizâr,  
 individual tribes and families  
 Azd al-Baḥrayn 24, 46, 102  
 Azd Sarât 7, 24, 33-41, 96, 102  
 Azd 'Umân 7, 24, 33, 41, 49, 102-4, 109, 117  
 Azd in Basra, *see* Basra  
 diaspora 24-31, 407-8  
 genealogical structure 22-34, 42-3  
 Ghassân/Jafna 8, 13, 16, 24, 26-9, 76  
 'Imrân 27, 32-3, 46-7  
 Mâlik b. Fahm 25-7, 31-3, 35-45, 59, 83, 85-6, 102-3
-

- Shanu'a 18, 24, 32-4, 48-51, 101-2, 185  
 'the Two Azds' 12-14, 28-31  
 'Azzân b. al-Hizbar 323-4, 331-2  
 'Azzân b. al-Ṣaqr 220-1, 253, 264-5, 280, 296-7  
 Badiyya 41  
 Baghdad, Ibâḍis in 273  
 al-Baghdâdi ('Abd al-Qâhir) 134, 139, 153, 423  
 Bahlâ xxvi, 11, 242, 244, 295, 329, 336, 339, 370, 396, 398, 400, 411  
 Bahrain, islands xxv, 158, 397, 404  
 al-Baḥrayn (old regional designation) xxv, 74, 87, 91, 266, 319, 397, 407  
     pre-Islamic 5, 13-14, 18, 25-7, 29, 32, 45-50, 62, 70-1  
     Khawârij in 157-8, *see also*; Najda  
     relations with Oman *see* principally 'Abd al-Qays, Azd al-Baḥrayn, 'Uqaylids, 'Uyûnids, Qarâmiṭa  
 Bâjila 95, 117, 138, 140  
 Bakr b. Wâ'il 15, 46, 92, 97, 143, 148, *see also*; Basra  
     in pre-Islamic times 2, 12, 71  
 Balj b. 'Uqba 179-82  
 Balûch/Balûsh 356, 398 n.6, 411  
 Bâriq/Bâriqi 30 n.70, 33, 47, 49, 80  
     Ḥudhayfa b. Miḥsan al- 80-7  
 al-Barrâdi xxxii, 161-2, 433  
 Barrîdis 333  
 al-Bârûni, Sulaymân Pasha xxxiii, 154, 226 n. 40, 349 n. 50  
 (Abû Mundhir) Bashîr b. Abi 'Abdullâh Muḥammad b. Maḥbûb xxxii, 224-5, 337, 364, 368, 414  
     *K. al-Raṣf* 276, 278, 366, 416  
     *K. al-Muḥâraba* 131-2, 134, 245-6, 278-9, 359, 366-7, 415-16  
 Bashîr b. al-Mundhir (al-Sâmi) family members 242, 245, 247, 250, 254, 256-7, 264-5, 290, 328  
 Basra (al-Baṣra) (for Ibâḍi activity there *see* Ibâḍis) 1-2, 20, 88, 91, 94-6, 266, 269-70, 300-1, 333, 408  
     Azd origins and early leadership in 3-4, 11, 23, 47, 90, 92, 95, 97-107  
     *akhmâs* and tribal structure 9, 48, 54, 99-104  
     in the first *fitna* *see* Camel, battle of  
     in the second *fitna* 15, 104-7  
 Bâṭina coast (regional structure and general) xxvii, 41, 51, 281, 294, 301, 306, 327, 396  
 Bayhâsiyya 152, 154  
 Baynûna xxv, 46, 157-8  
 bedu/bedouins, *see* nomads; *see also*; Ibn Khaldûn *badw wa hadar*  
 Berbers (*general: otherwise see* mainly under Maghrib and individual tribes) xi, xiii, 4-5, 170, 215-17, 219, 238, 302, 382-4, 426  
 Bilâds B. Bu 'Ali and Ḥasan xxvii, 41, 43, 215-17, 219, 302  
 Bisyâ 180, 262 n. 31, 336  
     al-Bisyâni *see* Abû'l-Ḥasan
-

- (p.460)** Buraimi oasis *see* Tuwâm  
Busr b. Abi Arṭâh 99, 287, 289 n. 54  
Bûyids (Buwayhids) 335, 343-8, 350, 352, 401-3  
Byzantium/Byzantine Empire/Rûm 1, 5, 13, 15, 55-8  
Camel, battle of the 3, 9, 23, 48, 97-8, 137  
camels xxviii, 12-13, 17, 39, 78  
Ceylon/Sirandîb 56, 70, 295-6, 300  
China 56, 62 n. 88, 176, 180, 268, 299-300  
Christians/Christianity 57, 73 n. 19, 219-20, 275, 285, 302, 383, 424  
    in the Gulf in pre- and early Islamic times 56, 70-1, 146, 299  
coinage/currency/minting 138, 348  
consultation/*shûrâ* 139, 146, 229-30, 258, 281-5, 427-8  
Cook, M. 129, 132, 152, 155, 187, 202-3, 206-7, 371, 375  
copper xxviii, 57, 368  
crafts xiii, 314  
Crone, P. and with Zimmermann, F. xxxiv-v, 63-4, 129, 132, 134, 152, 158-9, 165, 172, 206, 269  
Cuperly, P. xxxvi, 274, 415, 420, 432  
customs dues, *see under* taxation  
Dabâ 41, 52, 62, 80-6, *see also*; apostasy wars  
Ḍabba (Bani Sâma clan) 48  
Ḍabba (Muḍar clan) 97, 105-7  
Dahriyya 233  
Damâ xxvii, 57, 59, 62, 244, 271-2, 294, 328, 345, 400  
al-Ḍank xxvi, 52-3  
al-Darjîni (Abû al-'Abbas Aḥmad) xii, 161-2, 426-7, 433  
dates/date palms xxviii, 74, 141, 307, 311, 316, 334  
Daw'an (Wadi, Hadramawt) 15, 286, 350  
Dawûdiyya/Da'ûdiyya 374, 422  
Daybul 56, 266, 298  
Dehqans 59-60, 147, 197-8, 292, 314, 317-18  
Dhahira (al-Zâhira) xxv n.1  
Dhofar (Zafâr) xxv, 35-6, 42, 406, 411  
Dibâ *see* Dabâ  
Ḍirar b. 'Amr 206, 278, 283  
*Dîwân al-Ma'rûḍ* 189-90, 433-4  
drought 294  
Ḍumâm/Ḍimâm b. al-Sâ ib xii, 126, 166-70, 176, 187-9  
    *K. Ḍumâm* xii, 163, 169, 190, 371, 418  
East Africa (*general: otherwise see* Kilwa, slaves, Zanj) 300-3, 404, 409  
Egypt/Miṣr 23, 96, 147, 218, 230  
Ennami, 'A. xxxiii, 189-90, 201, 374 n.18, 381, 433-4  
van Ess, J. xxxiii, 152, 164, 172, 189-91, 206, 225, 281, 387
-

- al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥawâri (al-Sâmi) 212, 220, 246, 272, 280, 287, 296-7, 321, 323, 326-7, 336, 363, 372
- al-Faḍl b. Jundab 170
- Fajḥ/Fajḥi, *see under* Yaḥmad
- falaj* (pl. *aflāj*) irrigation system xxvi, 201, 253, 294, 304-10, 315, 359, 370  
     distribution of water and shareholding 307-8, 316-17  
     history of 37-9, 58-9  
     maintenance 261, 306  
     taxation of 306
- Farâhîd /Farâhîdi 35, 41, 43-4, 102, 179, 251-2, 325, 327, *see also*; al-Rabî 'b. Ḥabîb
- Fârs 44, 55-6, 146-7, 266-8, 299, 346-8, 356, 403-4, 406  
     early Islamic campaigns in 1, 44, 46, 55, 71, 87, 91-4
- Fash/Fashḥ 52, 246
- Fâtîmids 330, 349-50, 355, 382, 384-5, 405
- al-Fazâri, *see* 'Abdullâh b. Yazîd al-Fazâri
- Firq 62, 184-6, 323, 358
- fish/fishing xxviii, 311
- floods 257-8, 294
- 'Forbidding Wrong', *see Arabic Index; amr bi'l-ma'rûf ...*
- Francesca, E. xxxiii, 73 n. 19, 188, 189 n.67, 191-2, 195, 196 n.77, 200, 311 n.15, 388, 436-7
- genealogy, *see under* tribes
- Ghadaf xxvii, 243, 249, 357
- Ghâfir (Bani)/ Wadi Bani Ghâfir xxvii, 48, 51, 248, 324
- Ghassânids, *see under* Azd
- Ghaylân al-Dimashqi 222, 225, 283
- gold 299-301, 436-7
- ḥadîth* ix-x, xiv, 126-8, 232, 414  
     Sunni collections 414-15, 418, 432, 435-6  
     Ibâḍi use of ix, 128, 275-6, 366, 374-8, 386-8, 414-17, 419, 432-7
- Hadramawt/Ḥaḍramawt xxv, 12-15, 22, 35-7, 75-6, 256, 319, 409-11, *see also*; Kinda  
     apostasy in 78-9  
     Hadramis role in early propagation of Ibâḍism 216-17, 286  
     Imamate and Ibâḍism in 3, 180-3, 236, 284-7, 290, 302, 349-50, 354-5, 362, **(p.461)** 364-6, 374-6, 410, *see also*; Imams (Hadramawt)
- Ḥafit 295
- Ḥâjib al-Ṭâ'iy xii, 168-70, 175-80, 182, 216-18, 221-3, 225, 227-8, 234, 242, 281, 362, 369
- Hajj (*ḥajj*) xii, 112, 151, 162, 180-2, 196, 235-7, 279, 333-4, 431
- Hajjaj (al-Ḥajjaj b. Yûsuf al-Thaqafi) 2, 19, 65, 110-11, 114-15, 117-19, 147, 185, 187  
     occupies Oman 89, 118-19, 197
- Hamdân 2, 22-3, 37, 95, 99, 137, 182
- Ḥanafî (Sunni school) *see* Abû Ḥanîfa
- Hanbali (Sunni school) *see* Ibn Ḥanbal
- Ḥanîfa (Bani) 2, 18, 46, 48, 160, *see also*; Najda
-



- Ḥārith (Mâlik b. Fahm) 41, 43, 83, 85, 243, 325-7  
 Ḥârûn b. al-Yamân 166, 193-4, 229, 231-5, 269  
 Ḥarûrâ' 139-40  
 al-Ḥasâ /al-Aḥsâ' xxv, 39, 70, 141, 333-4, 400  
 al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri 119, 134, 173-4, 185-6, 190-1, 225, 378, 388, 417  
 Ḥâshim b. Ghaylân (of Sijâ) and family 242-3, 247, 266, 270-2, 290, 294, 298, 341  
 Ḥattâ 51-2, 257  
 (Abû 'Abdullâh) Ḥattât b. Kâtib 171, 173, 204, 243  
 Hawwâra 216, 238-9, 383  
 Haytham (b. 'Adi) 87 n.55, 189, 418  
 Hell/hellfire/damnation 128-30, 132-3, 223, 225, 288  
 Hijâr (Rustaḡ, Batina, Wadi B. Khârûṣ) 47, 248, 255, 292, 294, 324, 358  
 Hijaz/Hijazis xi, 2, 13, 15, 18, 23, 33, 48, 113, 141  
     attitudes towards Azd and Omanis 4-5, 64-5, 313  
 Hilâl (Bani) 171, 425  
 Hilâl b. 'Aṭiyya al-Khurâsâni 160, 179, 194, 213-15  
 Ḥimṣ 7 20, 53-4  
 Ḥimyar/Ḥimyari 6-7, 20-2, 25, 29, 36-7, 50, 120-1, 180-2, *see also*; Sabaeo-Himyarite state  
 Hinâ (Bani)/Hinâ'i (correctly Hunâ'a) 15, 35, 41, 43-4, 47, 54, 102, 212, 243-5, 326-8, 401, 409  
 Hind/India xxviii, 55-6, 62 n. 88, 88, 95, 261, 264, 266, 295, 300, 355  
     *Arḡ al-Hind* xiii, 5, 55-8, 70  
 Hinds, M. xxxv, 85, 91, 94, 136, 143  
 Hira (al-Ḥîra) 25-9, 49  
 Hishâm b. al-Ḥakm 229, 276, 283  
 Hormuz/Hormuzis 328, 356, 403-7  
     dynasty 44, 403, 405-7, 409, 411 *see also*; Julandâ b. Karkar  
 horses 12, 17, 55  
 Hûd b. Maḥkam 134, 217, 228, 378, 386  
 Ḥuddân (Shanu'a Azd) 33, 51, 92, 97, 246-7, 249, 322-8, 331-2, 357, 398, 411-12  
 Ḥudhayfa b. Miḥsan *see under* Bâriq  
 Ḥusayn b. (Caliph) 'Ali 104, 144-5, 288  
 Huzû 44, 267, 328, 403  
 Ibâḍis/Ibâḍism  
     community membership 166-70, 219-21, 226, 430, *see also Arabic Index walâya wa barâ'a, wuqûf*  
     conduct of warfare, *see* warfare  
     development of *fiqh*, *see Arabic Index; fiqh, ra'y*  
     development as a *madhhab*, *see Arabic Index; madhhab; see also*; al- 'Awtabi, Ibn Baraka  
     differences from other Islamic schools 226-7, 281, *see also; ḥadîth*, Imamate, Qur'ân,  
     created debate, *and in Arabic Index; ru'ya*  
     history, standard model of ix, 122, 151, 154-6, 161-8, 172, 174-7, 183-4, 193, 201-2, 209,  
     216, 230, 394, 418-19, 437, *see also; ḥadîth*  
     Imamate (q.v.)
-

- Imams (q.v.)  
inter-community contact/correspondence (general) 380-1, 424-5, *see also*; Hajj  
legal system *see* law  
Mu'tazili influence (q.v.)  
*nahḍa* (renaissance) and neo-Ibâḍism xiv, xxxvii, 11, 201, 435-7  
proselytising ix, xiv, 4, 218-9, 237-40, 249-2, 370-1, *see also Arabic Index; da'wa*  
schisms, *see under* Khalafiyya, Nukkâr, Shu'aybiyya, Ṭurayfiyya, 'Umayriyya  
social milieu 4-6, 61, 65, 77, 149-50, 180, 308-13, 319  
tribal/regional milieu 1-5, 48, 53-4, 156-60, 173, 178-9, 284
- Ibn 'Abbâs ('Abdullâh) ix, 98-9, 134, 137, 139, 145-6, 148, 174, 184, 188, 196, 200, 371, 378, 383, 418, 437
- Ibn Abi al-'Âṣi 65
- Ibn al-Ash'ath ('Abd al-Rahmân b. Muḥammad) xi, 3, 115-17, 187, 205, 226
- (p.462)** Ibn al-Azraq (Nâfi'), *see* Azâriqa
- Ibn Baṭṭûṭa 406-7, 429-30
- Ibn Baraka (Abû Muḥammad al-Bahlawi) *see also; K. al-Taḳyîd*, Rustaq-Nizwâ party xiv, xxxii-iii, xxxvi, 128, 192-3, 276, 294, 335-6, 338-40, 342-3, 345, 363, 369-70, 372-7, 388, 390-1, 414-16, 437
- Ibn Durayd 31, 82, 213, 252, 267-8, 325, 391-2, 422
- Ibn Fendin 229-30, 383
- Ibn Ḥanbal/Ḥanbalis 274-5, 277, 304, 414
- Ibn Ḥawqal 153, 331, 334 n. 22
- Ibn Ḥazm 83, 151, 391-2
- Ibn Ibâḍ ix, xi, 150-4, 175, 177, 422  
letters xii, 127, 131, 141-2, 151, 155, 202-5, 207-8
- Ibn Ja'far (Abû Jâbir Muḥammad b. Ja'far al-Izkawi) 73, 298 n.71, 322, 338, 368  
*Jâmi'* 142, 163, 175, 293, 372-4
- Ibn al-Kalbi (Hishâm) and *Jamaharat al Nasab* 7-8, 20-1, 26-8, 30-3, 37, 104 n.29, 109
- Ibn Khaldûn xxix, 22, 61, 64, 122-3, 329-31, 343, 352, 375, 381, 384, 401  
*badw wa ḥaḍar* xxix, 22, 61, 381
- Ibn Khalfûn al-Mazâti 430-1, 433
- Ibn Maddâd family (of Nizwâ) xxxv-vi, 289, 437
- Ibn Mas'ûd ('Abdullâh), *see also; 'Umayriyya* 127-8, 220-1, 289, 376-7
- Ibn al-Nazar and family 280, 353, 399-401, 409, 423
- Ibn Ruzayq xxxvii
- Ibn Sa'd 74-5, 154-5, 186-7
- Ibn Şaghîr 279-80, 383, 386
- Ibn Sallâm 129, 143, 151, 162, 166-7, 202, 228, 237
- Ibn Sirîn (Muḥammad) 126, 189, 191, 377, 388
- Ibn 'Ubaydân (Muḥammad b. 'Abdullâh) 370, 377, 437
- Ibn Zubayr ('Abdullâh) xi, 21, 97-8, 105, 107-9, 111, 148
- Ibrâ xxvi, 41, 75 n.25, 242-3
- 'Ibri xxvi, *see also; Sirr*

idols 69-70

Idrîsi 402, 405-6

Ifrân/Ifrâni 229, 239, *see also*; Ibn Fendin

Ifriqiya 219, 238-9

'Ikrima 196, 200, 215-6

Imamate/ Imams general (Ibâdi)

as *Amîr al-mu'minîn*, *see in Arabic Index*; *Amîr al-mu'minîn*

administration 261, 293-4, 302, 352

constitutional powers of 208, 230, 242, 262, 361-2, 365-6, 429

deposing of 287, 281-2, 363-4, *see also*; Imams (Oman), al-Şalt b. Mâlik, deposing of;

Rustâq-Nizwâ party split

election of 143, 213, 229-30, 238, 258-9, 281-5, 323, 365

financial organisation, *see taxation, and in Arabic Index*; *bayt al-mâl*

legal system, *see law*

military organisation, *see navy, warfare; and in Arabic Index*; *jihâd, shurât*

relations with tribal system, *see under tribes; and in Arabic Index*; *ahl al-baghy, shurât*

relations with 'ulamâ' q.v.

territorial limits/two Imams in a *mişr*, *see in Arabic Index*; *mişr*

qualifications of 208, 312

types of:

*da'îf* xiv, 170, 212-13, 357-9, 363-5, 429

*difâ'i* xiv, 141, 182-3, 254, 335, 361-6, 429

*kitmân* xiv, 199, 364-5, 429

*muhtasib* 241-2, 365, 429

*shâri* xiv, 213, 257, 339-40, 351-2, 354, 361-3, 365-6, 429, *see also Arabic Index*;

*shirâ', shurât*

Imams (Hadramawt), *see also*; 'Abdullâh b. Yaḥyâ al-Kindi

Abû Ishâq Ibrâhîm b. Qays al-Hamdâni xxxiii, 136, 286-7, 290, 348-51, 353-5, 364-6

*K. al-Dalâ'il* xxxiii, 290, 297 n. 70, 351, 365, 375-6

Aḥmad b. Sulaymân 286

Sulaymân b. 'Abd al-'Azîz 246, 287

other 182-3, 255, 365

Imams (Oman)

'Abd al-Malik b. Ḥumayd al-'Alwi 245-6, 260, 262-3, 269, 289-90

Abû Qâsim Sa'îd b. 'Abdullâh al-Ruḥayli xxxii, 334-5, 339, 346, 362

Abû Sa'îd al-Qarmaṭi 331-2

'Azzân b. Tamîm al-Kharûşi 323, 325-8, 341-2

Ghassân b. 'Abdullâh al-Yaḥmadi 214, 244-5, 258-61, 266, 269

Ḥafş b. Râshid al-Yaḥmadi 335, 343, 345-6, 355

al-Ḥawâri b. 'Abdullâh al-Ḥuddâni 322, 325-7

Ibn Abi 'Affân *see* Muḥammad b. 'Abdullâh b. Abi 'Affân

**(p.463)** al-Julandâ b. Mas'ûd ix, 159, 175-6, 211-15, 242, 259-60, 302, 311

al-Khalîl b. Shâdhân al-Kharûşi 290, 335, 348-51, 354, 398

- Khanbash b. Muḥammad al-Kharûṣi 358-9, 395-6, 398  
Muḥammad b. 'Abdullâh b. Abi 'Affân al-Yaḥmadi 244, 252-6, 259-60  
Muḥammad b. Abi Ghassân al-Kharûṣi 358-60, 390, 403  
Muḥammad b. Ghassân b. 'Abdullâh al-Kharûṣi 400  
Muḥammad b. Khanbash al-Kharûṣi 358-9, 395-6  
Muhannâ b. Jayfar al-Fajḥi al-Yaḥmadi 260, 262-5, 269-70, 279, 290-2, 313-14, 364  
Râshid b. 'Ali al-Yaḥmadi 348, 351, 355, 357-8, 360  
Râshid b. al-Nazr al-Fajḥi al-Yaḥmadi 254, 323-5  
Râshid b. Sa'îd al-Yaḥmadi 342-8, 350-6  
Râshid b. Walîd 335, 338, 341, 345-6, 355 n.65  
al-Ṣalt b. Mâlik al-Kharûṣi 234, 264-5, 270, 290, 303, 319  
    deposing of and civil war xiv, 33, 44, 254-5, 322-8, *see also*; Rustaq-Nizwa party  
al-Wârith b. Ka'b al-Kharûṣi 254-9, 261, 269, 361  
minor Imams immediately post civil war 331-2, 340  
other 350, 355, 357  
Imams (North Africa/Maghrîb)  
    Abû Hâtîm al-Malzûzi 239, 361  
    Abû'l-Khaṭṭâb al-Ma'âfiri 238, 285, 361, 380, 382  
    Rustamids ix, 213, 236, 285, 361-2, 380-1  
        'Abd al-Raḥmân b. Rustam 162, 229, 236, 238-40, 283, 365, 383, 386  
        'Abd al-Wahhâb b. 'Abd al-Raḥmân 151, 229-31, 381-3, 386  
    Abû al-Yaqzan Muḥammad b. Aflaḥ 279-80, 383-4  
    Aflaḥ b. 'Abd al-Wahhâb 163, 279, 378, 381-3, 387, 435  
    other 216-7, 279, 383  
Imâmiyya 229, 283, 421  
'Imrân b. Ḥittân (al-Shaybânî) 142, 150, 157  
India, *see* Hind, Sind  
Iran/Persia (general) 5, 100  
irrigation, *see* agriculture, *falaj*  
Islam/Islamic (general) 76-8, 86, 112-13, 125  
    conversion to in Oman 72-7, 318-20  
    government in Oman in early Islamic times 86-90  
Istâl/Sitâl 248, 264, 399, 411  
Iyâd 12, 157 n.67  
Izki xxvi, xxxvi, 38, 48, 69, 241-3, 247, 253, 272, 317, 326, 396  
Jabal al-Akhḍar xxv-vii, 42, 80 n.38, 325  
(Abû Sha'thâ') Jâbir b. Zayd ix-x, xii, 62, 97, 119, 144, 167, 174, 183-205, 218, 252, 371, 374,  
378, 387-8, 393, 417-18, 430, 432-5  
    correspondence xii, xxxiii-iv, 89, 119, 195-8, 200, 289, 314, 316-17, 433  
    *Dîwân* 432  
    *Fatâwa* 189-92, 266, *see also*; al-Rabi' *Athâr*)  
Jadhîma al-Abrash 26-8, 32, 39  
Ja'far b. al-Sammâk/Sammân 65, 164, 167-8, 171, 173
-

- Jahâdim (Mâlik b. Fahm) 32, 43, 92, 102, 105  
al-Jâhiz 113, 149, 154, 301, 319  
Jahmiyya 154, 195, 227, 273-4  
Ja'lân xxvi-vii, 35, 41, 263, 406  
*Jâmi' /Jawâmi'* literature xiv, 371-7, 437  
al-Jannâwuni (Abû Zakariyyâ' b. al-Khayr) 230 n.53, 415  
Jawf (as Omani regional name) xxvi  
al-Jazîra 21, 32, 46, 91, 149  
Jerba 385, 425, 427  
Jews/Judaism 14 n.24, 50, 70, 79, 262, 275, 330  
al-Jubbâ'i 278  
Jubûr (Benjabar) 396-8  
Julandâ/Julandâni 43, 50, 52, 61-3, 72-4, 79-80, 86-90, 92, 118, 211-15, 242-9, 251, 256-7, 262-4, 286, 301, 313-14, 324  
Julandâ b. Karkar 44, 57, 62, 267, 328, 403-5, 408  
Julfâr xxv n.1, xxvi, 30, 39, 52, 92, 118, 158, 257, 322, 328  
Juynboll, G. 377, 417-18  
Ka'b b. Şûr al-Laqîti 71, 92, 97  
Kalb 5-7, 16, 20-1  
*Kashf al-Ghumma* xxxvi-vii, 37 n.11, 186, 424  
Khalaf b. Ziyâd al-Baĥrâni 82, 172, 194, 213-14, 241, 256  
Khalafiyya 382  
Khardallâh (Hajjaj's spy) 199  
Kharûş/Kharûşîş (Bani: for Imams q.v.) xxvii, 11, 50-1, 53, 248-9, 264, 403  
    Abû Bakr, known as al-Sitâli 399, 411  
    Abû-'l-Mu'thir al-Şalt b. Khamîs (q.v.)  
    Shâdhân b. al-Imâm Şalt (q.v.)  
**(p.464)** Kharusi, Kh. 189 n.67, 190-2, 386, 433-4  
Khawârij/Khâriji/Kharijism (general) 1-3, 5, 77, 98, 106-11, 113, 218-19, 233, 235, 423, Azâriqa, Bayhâsiyya, Muĥakimma, Najdîyya, Şufrîya  
    characteristics of revolts 146-50, 233, 311-13, 397, 435  
    minor revolts post Nahrawân xi, 100, 136, 143, 145, 157  
    *tafrîq al-Khawârij* 98, 108, 122, 125-6, 131, 142, 145, 151, 154-60  
Khawârizm xxxii, 377  
Khawlân 21  
Khâzim b. Khuzayma ('Abbâsid general) 215  
Khirrît b. Râshid al-Nâji 48, 89, 145-7  
Khurâsân/Khurâsâni 1, 45, 109, 111, 212-13, 219-20, 228, 233, 403  
    Ibađism in and *Sîra* to xxxii, 134-5, 195, 198, 212, 219-20, 230 n.54, 284, 374  
    tribal structure of 100-1, 114-15  
Khuzâ'a 30 n.70, 80, 181, 237  
Khûzistân 1, 59, 91  
Kilwa 300-1, 404-5
-

- Ibâḍism in xiv, 390, 392, 407-9, 422-3
- Kinda 2-7, 13-18, 34, 46, 49-55, 75-6, 81, 180, 188, 237 *see also*; al-Ash'ath and Ibn al-Ash'ath  
Mu'âwiya 18, 52-4, 78-9  
    Ḥujrids 6, 13-16, 49-50, 52, 78  
Sakûn and Tujîb 52-4, 96, 120-1, 216, 249-50  
Sakâsîk 52-4, 120-1  
in Hadramawt 14-15, 18, 50, 52-4, 286  
in Oman 18, 50-4, 246-8 *see also under*; Nizwâ, Samad al-Kinda
- Kindî A
- Aḥmad b. 'Abdullâh 356-7, 359-60, 378-9, 395  
    *Muṣannaf* xiv, xxxi, 170, 293-4, 376, 378-80, 429, 437  
    other works xxxiv, 132, 224, 359-60, 366-7, 379-80
- Muḥammad b. al-Mu'allâ (missionary) q.v.
- Muḥammad b. Ibrâhîm 356, 370, 378-9  
    *Bayân al-Shar'* xiv, xxxi, 143, 378-80, 437
- Kirmân 44, 212, 356, 403, 405-6, 408-9, 411, *see also*; Bûyids
- K. *al-Taqyîd* xxxi-iii, 163, 273, 325, 342, 254, 374, 392
- al-Kûfa xi, 1-2, 87, 91, 94-9, 125, 129, 136-7, 408, *see also in Arabic Index*; *sâbiqa*,  
tribal organization/relations of 2, 14-5, 20, 22-3, 37, 53-4, 95-6, 114, 116, 137, *see also*;  
Camel, battle of; Şifîn  
Ibâḍism in 218, 229, 269-70, 274, 286
- Lakhmids/Naşrids 8, 16, 18, 24, 26-9, 49-50, 71
- land and property law  
abandoned land, *see Arabic Index*; *ramm*  
confiscation of xxxvi  
defence of rights and illegally seized land 308-9, 368-70  
evolution of *mulk* ownership xii, 314-17, 370  
notions of ownership and establishing rights 305-6, *see also Arabic Index*; *haqq*, *mawât*  
taxes, *see under* taxation, *and also Arabic Index*; *kharâj*  
tenure 261, 285, 308, 315-19
- law (Ibâḍî; for evolution of *fiqh* q.v. *in Arabic Index*)  
commercial 295, 309-10, 288  
irrigation, *see* agriculture and *falaj*  
land and property, q.v.  
maritime xiii, 295-300  
punishments *see* property confiscation, *and in Arabic Index*; *ḥadd*  
relationship with customary law 266, 295-6, 307-10
- Lawâ 368
- Lewicki. T. xxxiv, 171-2, 174, 286
- Lewinstein, K. 159, 238
- livestock herding xxviii, 54-5, 309, 311, *see also*; camels, horses
- Ma'add 6, 12-13, 16-18, 28, 35, 116
- Ma'âwil (Bani) 50-1
-

- Madhhij 12-14, 16, 22, 37  
Madelung, W. 132, 152, 206, 209, 228, 274, 330 n.32  
Madina *see* Mecca  
Maghrib (Ibâḍis in): *see* notably Berbers, Imams (North Africa), Mzab, Wargla, individual names, Ibâḍis (schisms)  
    Basran missionaries and contact x, 162, 177, 218, 237-40, 285, *see also*; Hajj  
    early Ṣufri and Ibâḍi campaigns 215-17, 238-9  
    Rustamid period, *see under* Imams (North Africa)  
    post Rustamid x, 382-5  
    comparison with Oman xiii, 306-7, 280-5, 428-9  
Mahra/Mahraland xxv, 12, 21, 35-7, 39, 42-3, 80-1, 246, 262-3, 301-2, 324  
Maishân/Mesene 29-30, *see also*; Obollah  
**(p.465)** Majâza, battle of 245-6, 256  
Majazz 44, 179, 294-5, 325  
Makrân 57, 95, 356, 406, 411  
Malabar Coast 300  
Mâlik b. al-Ashtar al-Nakhâ'i, *see* Nakhâ'i  
Mâlik b. Fahm, *see* Azd  
Mâlik/Mâliki (Sunni school) x, 216, 374, 382, 386-7, 416  
Ma'n (Mâlik b. Fahm) 41, 43  
    Humaym 243  
    Mas'ûd b. 'Amr al-Ma'ni (al-Qamr) 43, 103-7  
Ma'n b. Zâ'ida al-Shaybâni 15, 183  
Manah/Manahi 48, 243, 347, 253, 261, 294, 351, 357, 396, 402, 409  
    Qadi Abû Bakr Aḥmad b. 'Umar 355, 357-8, 360, 369  
    Qadi Nijâd b. Mûsâ and family 351, 353, 356-8, 395, 402  
Manâqi 302, 335  
Mârib 24-6  
Marj Râhiṭ 7, 20-1  
marriage 196, 198 n. 81, 214, 433  
Marzban/Marâziba 37, 59-60, 93  
al-Mas'ûdi 27, 65, 286, 300, 360  
Mazdakism 49, 58, 310  
Mâzin b. Ghaḍûba 69  
Mazûn 6, 20, 25, 40, 62-3, 65, 71  
Mecca, Madina/Holy Cities ix, 144, 148, 180-2, 237  
    in pre-Islamic times 2, 6, 12-13  
    *Yawm Makka* 171, 182  
    Pilgrimage, *see* Hajj  
merchant communities (foreign) 266, 299  
Midradids 216, 239-40  
Minâ 181, 237  
minerals/mining xiii, xxviii, 309-10, 314, *see also*; copper
-

- money, *see* coinage
- Montgomery Watt, W. 222, 225, 278
- mosques 75 n.25, 77, 295, 425  
    attendance at 194, 234, 294  
    Imam of 294, 304
- al-Mubarrad 151, 252
- Muḍar 6, 12-13, 15, 18, 28, 99-100, 102, 105-6, 114-16, 137, 157, 160, 178
- al-Mudawwana* xii, 183, 189, 230 n.54, 231-2, 381, 386-9, 432-4, 436, *see also*; Abû Ghânim
- Muḥakkima, origins and use of term by  
    Ibâdis ix, xii, 1-3, 121, 124-5, 129-31, 136-44, 153, 179, 195, 200, 209-10, 275
- Muhallabids xxxv, 47, 65, 90, 110-11, 114-21, 173, 178 n.40, 198, 239  
    Abi Şufra 65, 76, 82, 85, 92-3, 110-11  
    al-Muhallab 4, 19, 32, 44, 90, 98, 100-1, 104, 107-11, 115-17  
    'Abd al-Malik b. al-Muhallab 195, 197, 235, 302-3  
    Yazîd b. al-Muhallab xi, 2-3, 19, 65, 90, 115-20, 170, 173, 167  
    other individuals 90, 108, 110, 119-21, 188, 195, 239, 257
- Muḥammad (The Prophet) 78, *see also*; *ḥadith*, and in *Arabic Index*; *sunnat al-nabî*  
    letters and missions to and from Oman 61, 72-7, 315
- Muḥammad b. Bûr/Nûr/Thawr ('Abbâsid general) 328-9
- Muḥammad b. Mu'allâ al-Kindi 52, 246-50
- Muḥammad b. Rûḥ/Rawḥ 321-2, 332, 337-8
- Mukramids 347-8, 350, 352, 401-2
- al-Mulayḥ b. Ḥassân 152, 163-5, 169, 179, 224
- Munîr b. al-Nayyir al-Riyâmi 42, 157, 166, 214, 250, 260, 380  
    other family members 214, 265
- Murâd 12, 16, 22, 216-17
- Murji'a x, 5, 129-30, 187-8, 225, 232-3, 269, 271, 312
- Mûsâ b. Abi Jâbir (al-Sâmi and family) 242, 245, 250-6, 259-60, 288, 290  
    (Abû 'Ali) Mûsâ b. 'Ali 132, 245, 247-8, 262-3, 270-3, 282, 287-8, 290-1, 293, 297, 371  
    Mûsâ b. Mûsâ 290, 322-6, 339-40  
    other 262
- Muş'ab b. al-Zubayr 111, 119, 148
- Muscat (Masqaṭ) xxvii, 118, 406
- Mushâqîşa/Shaqşi xxxv, 48, 253
- Mu'tazila/Mu'tazilism 145, 221-7, 288, *see also*; Qur'ân creation debate, names of individuals (e.g. Wâsil), and in *Arabic Index*; 'aql, *manzila bayn al-manzilatayn*  
    influence on Ibâdism x, 226-7, 271-81, 340, 366, 374, 376, 382-3, 386, 392, 414, 416, 421
- Mzâb xiii, 236, 319, 385  
    history of Ibâdi settlement 425-8  
    Ibâdi organization in 305-7, 427-9
- Nabâhina/Nabhâni xxxvi, 10, 396-403, 411-12  
    Bani Mu'ammâr 253, 337, 399, 402, 411  
    clan origins 399-402
-



- Nabataeans 150, 283, 320
- Naffâth b. (Abi Yûnis) Naşr al-Nafûsi 231 n.55, 432
- Nâfi' (Bani) 243, 359
- (p.466)** Nafûsa (Jabal)/Nafûsans xiii, xxxiv, 200, 231, 238-40, 285, 381-4, 424
- Nahrawân and Nukhayla, battles of 2, 139-44, 365
- Najd xxv, 13-14, 400
- Najda b. 'Âmir al-Ḥanafi/ Najdîyya/Najadât xi, 89, 108, 134-5, 157-8, 300
- Nâjiyya/Najw (Bani) 24, 80, 99, 145-7, 246, 282, *see also*; Râshid b. Khirrît, Sâma (Beni)
- Najrân 12, 15-16, 22
- al-Nakhâ'i, al-Ashtar and family 37, 96, 116-17, 137
- al-Nakhal xxvii, 53, 262, 357, 390, 396, 400
- navy/naval power 263, 266, 291, 302, 338, 344
- Nestorians, *see* Christianity
- Nizâr (eponym) 12-13, 18, 26, 116
- Nizâr and Yaman (moiety divisions), *see* Yaman and Nizar
- Nizwâ xxvi, 38, 75 n. 25, 243, 252-3, 257-8, 261, 263, 271, 295-6, 396, 398, 411-12
- 'Aqr 48, 250, 253, 265 n.40, 337, 356, 359, 379, 390, 409, 411-12
- as capital of the Imamate 253
- forts 252-3
- geography and tribal groups of 253
- Nizwâ party Imams, *see* Rustâq—Nizwâ party split
- Samad al-Kinda 53, 253, 261, 359, 379, 399, 411
- Su'âl 253, 338, 370
- nomads/nomadism/bedouin 39, 54, 61, 78
- attitudes towards in early Islamic period 21-2, 63-4, 126, 141, 146, 182
- badw wa haḍar*, *see under* Ibn Khaldûn
- relations with settled in Oman 305, 308
- Nukhayla, *see* Nahrawân
- Nukkârites 151, 229-31, 269-70, 282-4, 361, 384-5, 425
- Obollah 1, 56, 65, 91, 266
- Oman / 'Umân (geography and pre-Ibâḍi history)
- regional structure and regional identity xiii, xxv-xxix, 68
- linkages with the Persian coast xxviii, 38, 44, 47, 212, 266-7 *see also*; Julandâ b. Karkar, Hormuz
- pre-Islamic Arab migration to 35-55
- pre-Islamic non-Arab South Arabian presence in 39-40
- pre-Islamic government in Oman, *see* Sasanids, Julandâ
- for conversion to Islam and early Islamic period *see under* Islam
- Omāna 29-30
- Parthians 29, 40
- pearls/pearling xxviii, 56, 298, 305, 334
- peasants xi, 5, 123, 147-8, 308-12, *see also*; land tenure, *and in Arabic Index*; bayâdîr
- pirates/piracy/*bawârij* 44, 57, 245, 260-1, 264-6, 291, 302-3

- prayer 191, 196, 234, 294  
 at sea 297-8  
 number of *rak'as* 196 289-90
- property, *see* land
- Qadar/Qadariyya x, 152, 163, 174, 190, 208, 221-7, 269, 271-2, 277, 284, 377
- Qaḥṭân 7, 14, 20-2, 39, 79, 183
- Qalhât xxvi, 35, 37, 41, 44, 62, 406-9, 411, 429
- al-Qalhâti (Abû 'Abdullâh Muḥammad b. Sa'îd) xiii-xiv, xxxvi, 135, 140, 154, 374, 407-9, 421-4
- qanât *see falaj*
- Qarâmiṭa (Carmathians) 300, 330-34, 344-5, 353 n.57, 397-8
- Qatâda b. Di'âma al-Sadûsi 388  
*Aqwâl Qatâda* 189-92
- Qaṭar xxv, 46, 62 n.87, 70
- Qaṭari b. Fujâ'a 110-11, 138, 385
- Qaṭîf 148, 158
- Qayrawân 215-17, 238-9, 387
- Qays (tribal grouping) 7, 12, 20-1
- Qays (Kîsh) 266, 397, 403-6
- Quḍâ' a 5, 7, 12, 15, 18, 184  
 as a south Arabian grouping 32, 35-7  
 switch of genealogy and Ibn al-Kalbi manipulation 10, 20-1, 26-31 *see also*; Ibn al-Kalbi
- Qudayd, battle of 181
- Quietists/*qa'ada* 108, 127, 129-30, 136, 144, 155-6, 172-3, 199, 208, 217, 233, 241, 291
- Qur'ân/*Kitâb Allâh* 75, 137, 196  
 fundamental role in Ibâḍism xi, 9, 83, 127-8, 135, 138-9, 142-3, 191, 207, 287, 413  
 created debate 236, 272-81, 340, 386, 410, 414
- Quraysh 6, 12, 47, 67, 78, 113, 179, 181, 226-7, 237, 241
- Qutayba b. Muslim al-Bâhili 19, 117
- al-Rabî' b. Ḥabîb al-Farâhîdi (Basran 'Imam') ix, xii, 151, 161-2, 165, 176-7, 184, 194, 227-8, 230-1, 242, **(p.467)** 251-2, 273, 284, 361-2, 393-4, 418, 432-6  
*Âthâr* xii, 189-92, 371, 375, 387-8, 418-19, 432-3  
*Musnad/Jâmi al-Ṣaḥîḥ* ix-x, 184, 374, 378, 387, 433-6
- Rabî' a 2, 12, 14-15, 18, 46, 100, 105, 114-16, 137
- Râfida 141, 377
- Ra'îs (Awlâd)/Riyâyisa 398, 411-12
- Râsib (Bani) 24, 42-3, 140
- al-Rawḍa, battle of 248, 323-5
- Raysût 42, 298, 406
- Red Sea 56, 405
- Rêv-Ardashîr 56, 70-1, 94
- Riyâm (Bani)/Riyâmi/ Jabal Riyâm 10-11, 42, 80 n. 38, 250, 253  
 Mahra origins 36, 42  
 Munîr b. al-Nayyar al-, q.v.
-

- Riyâyisa, *see* Ra'îs (Awlad)
- Rubinacci, R. 415
- Ruḍâ 42
- Ruhayl/Raḥîl (Âl) 164, 172, 187, 237, 284:  
for the following individuals q.v:  
'Abdullâh b. Muḥammad Abû  
'Abdullâh Muḥammad; Abû Qâsim  
Sa'îd, *see under* Imams (Oman);  
Abû Sufyân Maḥbûb; Bashîr b. Abi  
'Abdullâh Muḥammad
- Rustamids, *see under* Imams (North Africa)
- al-Rustâq xxvii, xxxi, 51-2  
location and tribal structure, *see also*; Ghadaf, Yaḥmad  
pre-Islamic origins 58-9  
in First Imamate 234, 248, 292, 324  
post-civil war 355, 358, 395-6  
Rustâq party, *see* Rustâq-Nizwâ, party split
- Rustâq-Nizwâ, party split x, xiv, 254-5, 289, 379-80, 417, 423, 437  
development of 334-43, 351, 353-5, 357-60
- Ruwâḥa (Bani) 10-11
- Sabaeo-Himyarite state xi, xxv, 6, 11-18, 24-6, 38 n.16, 39-40, 57-8, 301
- Ṣaffârîds 44, 267-8, 329, 332
- Sa'îd b. Muhriz and family 271-2, 276, 298, 309, 341
- Sâlim b. Dhakwân xii, xiv, xxxiv, 63-4, 127, 129-30, 133, 135, 142, 149, 155, 158, 166, 171, 186,  
191, 193, 196-7, 199, 205-10, 226, 233, 430
- Salîma (Bani) 31-2, 41, 43-4, 102, 179, 325, 327-8, 405
- al-Sâlimi, 'Abd al-Rahmân, *see* Al-Salmi, 'A-R
- al-Sâlimi, 'Abdullâh b. Ḥumayd xxxv, xxxvii, 48, 232, 280-1, 228-9, 346, 349, 355, 357-8, 392,  
435-6
- Saljûqs 350, 356, 402-6
- Salût/Salûti 37-40, 51, 247, 249, 323-5, 336, 370
- Sâma b. Luay/Bani Sâma 10-11, 47-8, 71, 267, 323-32, 357
- Samad (al-Sha'n; for Samad al-Kinda *see* Nizwâ) xxvi, 40-1, 328
- Ṣan'â' 148, 181-3
- Sarât 13, 33, 35, 47-8, 48, *see also*; Azd Sarât
- Sasânid dynasty  
Ardashîr (b. Bâbak) 25, 30, 36  
Kisra Anûshiravân 50, 55, 58-61  
Kisra II Abarwêz 58, 71-2  
Kubadh I/Kawâdh 49  
Shâpûr II 28, 29 n.67, 45, 49, 58  
Yazdagird II 49  
other 71
- Sasânids 1, 5, 49-50, 124, 313, *see also*; Asâwira, Marâziba, dehqans
-

- rule and administration in Oman 25, 40, 57-63, 72  
 expelled from Oman 40, 73-4  
 maritime empire, *see* *Hind Arḍ al-Hind*
- Sawâd 1, 16, 49, 91, 145, 314, 408
- Sawni, *see* al- 'Awâbi
- Sayf b. 'Urnar (as a source) 68, 77, 79-80, 84-6, 95, 104
- Sayfam 244, 257
- Schacht, J. 216, 377, 382, 413
- Secession, *see* *Arabic Index khurûj*
- Seistan (Sîstân/Sijistân) 1, 15, 100, 111, 115, 131, 149, 183, 206, 209, 267, 312, 314, 356, 403
- Shabîb b. 'Aṭiyya xii, 127, 129, 179, 213-14, 241-2, 288-9
- Shâdhân b. al-Imâm Şalt al-Kharûşi 323-4, 327, 357
- Shâfi'is (Sunni school) x, 374, 376, 382, 392, 408-9, 413-17, 422-3, *see also under*; Sunnis, Shâfi'i/Sunni Ash'arism)
- al-Shahrastâni 138, 152, 232, 278, 423, 431
- al-Shâm, *see* Syria
- Shammakhi (Abû'l- 'Abbâs Aḥmad) xii, 161-2, 429, 431, 433
- al-Sharqîyya xxvi, 41
- Shaybân (in Khâriji revolts) 2, 149-50, 178, 183, 204-6
- al-Sbîḥr 35-6, 81, 286, 410
- Shi'a (general) 113, 127, 129, 142, 145, 152, 376  
 extremist sects 131 n. 10, 141, 158, 408, 421
- ships/shipbuilding 295-6, 300
- (p.468)** Sirandîb, *see* Ceylon
- Shîrâz/Shîrâzis 267, 328, 390, 398, 403, 408, 411
- Shu'aybiyya 227-8  
 Shu'ayb b. Ma'rûf al-Miṣri 228-30
- Şiffin ix, 1, 9, 23, 136-9
- Sijilmâsa 239, 382, 384
- Sijistân/Sîstân, *see* Seistan
- Sinaw 263, 353
- Sind/Manşûra xiv, 62 n. 88, 95, 266, 295, 353
- sin, classifications of 131-5, 232-3, 364 *see also in Arabic Index; hadd*
- Sîra/siyar epistle literary form xiv, xxxiv-v, 380-2
- Sîrâf 65, 94, 266-8, 298-90, 328, 333, 356, 403-4
- Sirr xxvi, 38, 45-6, 258, 260, 295, 326, 358  
 al-Sirri, Abû 'Abdullâh Muḥammad b. 'Isâ 358-9
- Siyâbija 57, 107
- slaves/slavery/slaving 84, 124, 148-9, 196, 216, 261, 292-3, 300-3, 312, 384, *see also in Arabic Index; siba*
- Smogorzewski, Z. xxxiv, xxxvi, 226 n.40
- Socotra 36, 215, 285, 301-2
- Sohar xiii, xxvi-viii, 56-7, 62, 65, 212
-

- in pre-Islamic times 30, 37, 56-7  
during First Imamate 212, 247, 257, 265-6, 268-70, 293-6, 298-9, 322, 324, 327-30, 384  
post-civil war to Bûyid times 57, 298, 329-34, 344, 348, 352-3, 368, 403  
post-Bûyid and decline 390, 399-400, 402-3, 406
- Spain, *see* Andalus
- Sudan/Soudan (*Bilâd al-Sudân*) 239, 381-2, 384-5
- Şufriş/Sufriyya ix-xi, 152, 155-60, 178-9, 215, 274  
so-called Şufri revolts 149-50, 154  
in North Africa 159-60, 215-17
- Şuhar *see* Sohar
- Şuḥar b. al-'Abd 164, 167, 221
- Sulayḥids 349, 354-5, 410
- Sulaymân b. Dâwûd 37-9
- al-Sumâyil (Sumâ'il) and Gap xxv-xxviii, 69, 118, 244-5, 270, 353, 399-401
- Sunna x, 138, 142, 192, 207, 414-15, *see also in Arabic Index; sunnat al-nabî*  
'Communiy Sunna' 126-7, 191, 200-1, 377, 419-20
- Sunnis (for individual schools q.v.) /Sunnism/ Sunni/Shâfi'i-Ash'arism x, 223-4, 226, 227 n. 41, 233, 235, 275-6, 376, 416, 421, 431; *see also in Arabic Index; madhhab*  
Ibâḍi convergence with Sunni norms, *see* al-'Awtabi, *ḥadîth*, Ibn Baraka; *and in Arabic Index; fiqh, madhhab*
- al-Şûr 406, 409
- Syria/Shâm 27-8, 32, 328, *see also*; Ḥimş, Quḍâ'a, Umayyads, Yaman and Nizâr  
in early Islamic period 1-2, 7-10, 94, *see also*; Şiffin  
Syrian troops in Iraq 115
- Tafsîr* 378, 386, 431
- Tahert ix-x, 230-1, 239-40, 279-80, 381, 383-4, 425, 429
- Ṭâḥiyya/Ṭâḥi 47, 72, 74, 101, 157, 167, 389
- Ṭâlib al-Ḥaqq *see* 'Abdullâh b. Yaḥyâ al-Kindi
- Tamîm xi, 2, 16, 18, 45-6, 65, 92, 114, 120-1, 138, 143-4, 148-9, 156, 160, 215, *see also*; al-Aḥnaf b. Qays, Basra
- Tanûkh 12, 20-1, 26-30, 32, 37, 103 n.24
- Tawwaj 1, 92-5
- taxes/taxation 61, 74, 78, 147, 266 *see also*; Khawârij, characteristics of; Sasanids, rule and administration; and in Arabic Index *kharâj*  
distribution and uses 120  
illegal/*maks* 89, 198, 298, 314, 352, 367-8  
*jizya* and *zakât* 120, 196-8, 286, 292, 298-9, 306, 310-11, 317, 380, 382, *see also in Arabic Index; sadaqa*
- Ṭayy 22, 35, 44-5, 137, 328  
In Basra 157, 178, *see also*; Ḥâjib al-Ṭâ'iy  
in Oman 44-6, 401-2
- Thaqafis, other than 'Amr b. al-'Âş, Hajjaj, 'Uthmân b. Abi al-'Âşî, q.v. 115, 178, 226, 266
- Tibghûrîn 228 n. 48, 277
-

trade (general importance) xxviii–xxix, 67, 384, 427

tribes

as a genealogical model 8–11, 21–23, 29, 63, 123–4

alliances in Oman (in Omani civil war *see under* Imams (Oman), al-Şalt, deposing of and civil war) 45–8, 51, 54–5, 243, 327, 359, 397–8, 401

and central government authority xii–xiii, xxix, 4, 214, 312–13, 320, *see also in Arabic Index; (ahl al-)–baghy*

shaikhs 10–1, *see also in Arabic Index; shaff, tamîma*

Tripolitania 230, 238

Ṭurayfiyya 124

Tuwâm/Tu'âm xxv n.1, xxvi, 38, 41, 45 57, 62 n.87, 212, 264, 293–5, 326

**(p.469)** 'Ubaydallâh b. Ziyâd 4, 99–100 103–5, 108, 116, 144, 323

'ulamâ' (ulema) 220, 337 *see also; Imamate, and in Arabic Index; 'azzâba, ḥalqa, 'ilm, khâṣṣ wa 'âmm*

organisation and precedence 220, 285, 296–7, 312, 380

role and authority 213, 217, 220, 250, 260–3, 281–2, 307, 428–9, 437

'Umar 73, 82, 127, 207, 217, 258–9, 393

Caliphate of 1, 8, 20, 23, 83–4, 86–8, 91, 94 125, 311, 430

'Umayriyya 221

Umayyads and state xi, 19, 112–16, 130, 384

'Abd al-Malik b. Marwân 54, 117–18, 148, 203–4, 235

'Abd al-Malik b. 'Umar II 170, 203–4, 235

Hishâm b. 'Abd al-Malik 173

Mâlik b. Marwân 114

Marwân b. al-Ḥakam 21, 97

Marwân II b. Muḥammad 152, 178, 204

Mu'âwiya b. Abi Sufyân 1–2, 14, 21, 23, 45, 89, 97–9, 139–43, 148, 290

Sulaymân b. 'Abd al-Malik 19, 90, 119–20, 203

'Umar II b. 'Abd al-Azîz 63–4, 90, 120, 216, 363

Ibâḍi delegation to 164, 170–1, 203–4, 209

Walîd I b. 'Abd al-Malik 19, 118–19

Walîd II 178

Yazîd I b. Mu'âwiya 21, 104–5

Yazîd II b. 'Abd al-Malik 120, 173, 185, 203

Yazîd III 225, 284

Umbû/Ambû Sa 'îd xxxvi, 48, 253

'Uqaylids 353, 397–8

'Urwa b. (Ḥudayr) b. Udayya 138, 144, 174, 267

'Uthmân 129–30, 255, 258–9

Caliphate 2, 95–7, 124–5, 138, 289–90

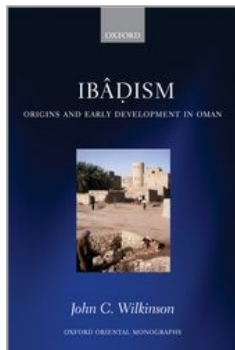
renunciation by Ibâḍis 63, 96, 138–43

'Uthmân b. Abi al-'Aṣi al-Thaqafi (and brothers) 87, 92–4, 110

'Uyûnids 353 n.57, 397, 404

- Veccia Vaglieri, L. 138  
Vision of God, *see in Arabic Index ru'ya*  
Wahb b. Munabbih 25, 226  
Wahbiyya (origins of the term) 140, 230-1  
Wahhâbis/Wahhâbism 64, 131, 227 n.41  
Wâ'il 46 n.36  
Wâ'il b. Ayyub *see* Abû Ayyûb  
Wajîhids 333-5, 343-4, 346  
warfare (Ibâḍi rules concerning) 124, 131-2, 135, 174, 264, 299-300, 359-60, 366-7, *see also*;  
Bashîr b. 'Abi 'Abdullâh, *al-Muhâraba*; navy, tribes; *and in Arabic Index*; (*ahl al-*) *baghy, jihâd, shurât*  
Warghla/Warjla 382, 384-5, 425, 427, 431  
al-Warjlâni, Abû Ya' qûb Yûsuf b. Ibrâhîm xiii, 161-3, 221, 296, 410, 424-5, 428-36  
*Tartîb* (but *see* primarily *al-Rabî' Musnad*) x, xiv-xv, 161-2, 184, 432, 436  
Wâsil b. 'Aṭâ'/Wâṣiliyya 134, 152, 222, 224-5, 231-2, 240, 283, 289, 382-3  
al-Wisyâni 162, 232  
women, *see also*; marriage 150, 173, 188, 196-7, 309, 312, 319 n.26, 375  
Ya'âruba xxxv, xxxvii, 10, 48, 51, 253, 291, 361, 370, 398-9, 437  
Yaḥmad, *see also*; Kharûṣ 33, 48, 51, 184-5, 248-9, 262, 322-8, 343, 357  
    Fajḥ 245, 248, 252, 258, 260, 292, 322-5, 327  
al-Yamâma xxv, 12, 45-6, 48, 80, 108, 148-9, 397  
Yaman and Nizâr (moiety groupings) x, 1-34, 114-17, 120-1, 124, 161, 183, 217, *see also*; Arabs  
northern, and southern, Ibn al-Kalbi etc.  
    pre-Islamic origins of division 11-18  
    theories of origins 6-7, 19-20, 30, 34  
    in Omani civil war (end 3/9th century) xiv, 326-8, 339, 401  
Yanqul xxvi, 51, 246, 326  
Yâqût 404-6  
Yâs 10, 12  
Yazîd b. Abi Muslim 119, 185, 187 n.63  
Yemen (=Greater Yemen region) xxv, 4, 15, 22-3, 37, 68, 81, 99, 181-3, 226, 241, 256, 345, 349,  
354-5, 409-10, *see also*; Hadramawt  
    Ibâḍism in 153, 228-9, 234, 285-6, 410  
al-Zâhira *see* Dhahira  
Zâhiriyya 414-15, 422  
Zanâta 216, 231, 239  
Zanj/*Bilâd al-Zanj* 56, 118, 343-5, 350, 407-8  
    revolts in 'Abbasid times 158, 267, 270  
Zaydis 23, 400, 410, 421  
Zoroastrians, *see in Arabic Index majûs*  
Ziyâd b. Abihi 4, 88, 99-101, 144, 169  
Ziyâd al-A'sam 154, 194-5  
al-Zubayr (b. al-'Awwâm) 2-3, 96-8
-

University Press Scholarship Online  
Oxford Scholarship Online



## Ibâdism: Origins and Early Development in Oman

John C. Wilkinson

Print publication date: 2010

Print ISBN-13: 9780199588268

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2011

DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588268.001.0001

### (p.470) Index of Arabic Terminology

The following list of terms is meant to indicate their main usage and where meaning is discussed. For the wider context of the subject the General Index should be consulted. Arabic titles of books discussed in the text will be found in the General Index either under author or as a separate entry.

*aḥdâth/ahl al-aḥdâth* 126, 132-3, 358, 379-80, 416

*ahl al-qibla/iqrâr* 131-2, 155, 366-7

*amân* and *amân* agreements 98, 242, 299-300, 303, 346

*Amîr al-mu'minîn* 3-7, 137-9, 178, 187, 213, 285

'*amr bi'l-ma'rûf...* (Forbidding Wrong) x, 181, 208, 263, 278, 291, 341, 362-3, 365-6, 375, 429

'*aqd*, see *General Index*; election under Imamate/Imams

'*aq*/human reasoning 128, 134, 226, 279, 339-40, 342, 366, 374-5, 386, 392, 413-16, 431, 437

'*araḍ*, see *jawhar* 276, 389, 416

'*aqîda* 380, 420, 431-2

*Arḍ al-Hind*, see *General Index*; under *Hind*

*âthâr (al-muslimîn/şâliḥîn)* x, 126, 128, 142, 193, 200-1, 217-18, 221, 230, 284, 311, 371-3, 377-9

'*ayb*, see *sharaf*

'*azzâba* xiii, 425-8

*badw*, see *General Index* nomads

*badw wa ḥaḍar*, see *General Index* under; Ibn Khaldûn

(*ahl al-*) *baghy* xiv, 132, 135, 366-8, 421

*ba'l* 306, 311

*barâ'a*, see under *walâya*

*başar* 127, 227, 287-8, 339, 363, 428

*ba wârij*, see *General Index*; pirates

*bayâdîr* (sing. *bîdâr*) 60-1, 308-9, 316

*bayâsira* (sing. *baysari*) 36-7, 42, 73 n.18, 319-20



- bayt al-mâl* 198, 215, 291-2, 317, 363, 368  
*dahâqîn/dehqans/dihqanân*, *see General Index*; Dehqans  
*da'îf*, *see General Index under*; Imamate  
*dâr/dîra* 41, 304 n.2  
*da'wa* 179, 193-5, 199, 204, 213, 217-18, 234-5, 266, 367, 370-1  
*dhimmi* 292, 299, 303, 314, 318, *see also General Index*; *jizya* under taxation  
*dhû'l-'imâma/tâj* 61-2, 79-80  
*difâ'*, *see General Index under*; Imamate  
*diyya* 196  
*(ahl al-) faḍl/faḍîla* 128, 291, 388, 414  
*falaj* (pl. *aflâj*), q.v. in *General Index*  
*farḍ/farîḍa* x, 128, 199, 220, 291, 338, 364, 389, 413-14  
*fâsiq* (pl. *fussâq*)/*fiṣq* 134-5, 220, 225, 421-2  
*fay'*, *see ṣawâfi*  
*fiqh/faqîh*, early development x, 138, 172, 200, 207, 217-18, 293-300, 370-1, 415, 433, 436-7  
    development during Second Imamate 370-89, 392-4  
*ghanîma* 83, 112, 124, 131, 135, 159, 194, 290-1, 299-300, 359, 385  
*ḥadd* punishments 133, 196-7, 232, 364, 375  
*ḥadîth*, q.v. in *General Index*  
*ḥajj*, *see General Index*; Hajj  
*ḥalqa* xiii, 165, 219, 424-8, 430  
*ḥamalât/ḥaml al-'ilm* x, 128, 162, 201, 219, 341-2, 388-9, 391-4, 417-19  
*ḥanath* 293  
*hanâqira* (sing. *hanqari*) 60, 308-9  
*ḥaqq* 178, 197, 234, 413, 415-16  
*ḥâra* 316  
*halâl wa ḥaram/ḥarîm* 127, 414  
*ḥifz*, *see General Index*; primarily under *Jâmi'/Jawâmi'* literature  
*hijra/muhâjirûn* 64, 94, 125-7, 206, 208, 330  
*ḥukm/hukûma/hâkim* xi, 83, *see also General Index*; Muhakkima  
    *lâ ḥukm illâ lillâh* 138, 142, 188, 238, 348 n.47, 362, 385  
*ijmâ'* 142, 341-2, 366, 371, 379, 389, 413-15  
*ijtihâd* 201, 220, 376, 416  
*'ilj* (pl. *'ulûj*) xi, 65, 106, 147, 319  
*'illa* 366, 416  
**(p.471)** *'ilm* ix, 128, 217-18, 227, 278, 371-3, 381-2, 416, 419, 428, *see also General Index*;  
*'ulamâ'*  
*imâma*, *see General Index*; Imamate  
*irjâ'* 129, 208, 225, 232, *see also General Index*; Murji'a  
*ism* (pl. *asmâ'*) 277-8  
*isnâd* 126, 176, 232, 276, 276-8, 386-9, 419-20, *see also*; *ḥamalât al-'ilm*  
*isti'râḍ* 108, 131, 157, 385  
*iyman* 133, 223-5, 368
-

- jabâbira* xiv, 135, 256, 349, 366-8  
*jamâ'at al-muslimîn* 129, 424  
*jawhar wa'l-a'râḍ* 224, 278, 416  
*jawr sultân al-jawr/jâ'i* 225, 346, 367-8  
*jihâd* 63, 174-5, 208, 218, 297, 362, *see also General Index*; warfare  
*jism* 227, 276, 389, 416  
*jizya*, *see General Index under*; taxation  
*kabâ'ir (râkib al-, ahl al- etc.)* 133, *see also General Index*; sin, classifications of  
*kalâm* x, 226-7, 273, 276, 278  
*kasb/kasaba/iktisâb* 223-4, 278  
*kharâj* 112, 123, 147, 198, 311, 317, 367, *see also General Index under*; taxation  
*khâṣṣ wa 'âmm* 220, 285, 312, 380, 408, *see also General Index*; 'ulamâ'  
*khurûj succession* xi, 125-6, 129-31, 153, 172-3, 187, 197, 209, 241, 285, 323, 342, 364-5  
*kitmân* ix-x, xii, 186, 199-202, 285, 365, 429-30, *see also General Index under*; Imamate  
*kufr/kâfir/kuffâr* 131-5, 219-20, 224-5, 232-3  
    *kufr juḥûd* 133-4  
    *kufr al-ni'ma* 132-4, 151, 421  
*madhhab* (development of term by Ibâḍis) x, xiii-xiv, 128, 162, 172, 177, 197, 199, 201, 360, 374-6, 392-4, 409, 419-20, 422-3, 430  
*majûs* xii-xiii, 70, 304, 309-10, 317-19, 334  
*ma'nâ* 228, 389, 416  
*manzila bayn al-manzilatayn* 135, 225-6, 232, 288  
*mawâli* (sing. *mawlâ*) 111, 113, 115, 117, 123, 149-50, 220  
    *mawlâ al-qawm minhum* 150, 220  
*mawât* 305, 370  
*miṣr* (pl. *amṣâr*) 1-2, 64, 125-6, 283, 285-6, 288, 290, 294-5, 382  
*muhtasib*, *see General Index under*; Imamate  
*mulk*, *see General Index under*; land  
*mulûk* (sing. *malik*) 10, 292, 355, 367, 396  
*nabîdh*, *see General Index*; alcohol  
*nifâq/munâfiqûn* 132-5  
*qa'ada*, *see General Index*; quietism  
*qadar*, *see General Index*; Qadarîyya  
*qanât*, *see General Index*; *falaj*  
*qawl wa 'aml* 177, 217, 278  
*qawm* 19, 131-2, 155, 186, 194, 226, 416  
*qiyâs* 191, 227, 229, 278, 366, 375, 381, 389, 414-17  
*qurbi* 290-1  
*qurrâ'* 136-8, 140  
*rak'a*, *see General Index under*; prayer  
*ramm* 309-10, 369-70  
*ra'y* x, 138, 200, 217-18, 371, 414-16, 433  
*ridda*, *see General Index*; apostasy wars
-

- ru'ya/vision of God 227, 232, 281  
sâbiqa 1, 94-5, 312  
şadaqa 72-3, 77-8, 82, 86, 198, 311, 369, *see also General Index under*; taxation zakât  
sam'/sum'a 128, 134, 215, 227, 279, 339-40, 414, 416, 431  
şawâfi 99, 123, 285, 290-1, 314, 317, 325  
shaff 9  
shahâda/shâhid/witness 175, 220, 233, 262, 342, 368, 378, 387  
shakk/shukkâk 126, 134, 226, 232-4, 289, 322, 341, 393, 417  
sharaf 3, 10, 63, 95, 111, 113-14, 123-4  
sharî'a 201, 279, 416, 437, *see also General Index*; law  
shabh/tashbîh, *see General Index*; anthropomorphism  
shart (pl. shurût) 230, 361-2  
shirâ (for shâri *see General Index under*; Imamate) 136, 171-7, 187, 285, 361-2, 365, 430; *see also*; shurât  
shirk/mushrik/tashrîk 83, 108, 129, 131, 133-4, 194-5, 232  
shûrâ, *see General Index*; consultation  
shurât 153-4, 174, 214, 245, 257, 260-1, 290-1, 322, 345, 361-2, 402, *see also*; shirâ  
sibâ'/sby 73, 83, 124, 131, 135  
şifât (Allâh) 128, 219, 224, 273, 276-8  
sîra/siyar (epistle, literary form), q.v. *in General Index*  
şulh 124, 302-3  
suunat ardikum 266  
sunnat al-nabî 112, 125, 234, 285, 413-14, 437, *see also General Index*; Sunnis  
sûq al-'arab 36, 62, 67  
**(p.472)** tâ'a 208, 213, 215, 223, 238, 362  
ta'tîl 274  
tamîma 10  
taqiyya 157, 186-7, 208, 215, 217, 285, 349, 364, 368, 421  
taqwa 232-3  
tawba 139, 241, 289, 322, 351, 358  
tawhîd 227, 431  
'ulama' q.v. *in General Index*  
'urf, *see sunnat ardikum*  
uşûl/aşl/al-fîqh/al-dîn xxxii, 389, 414, 416  
walâya wa barâ'a x, 130, 135, 141, 169, 173, 192, 198, 204, 207, 219-21, 232, 242, 288, 338, 341-2, 393, 417, 428-9, 437, *see also General Index*; Rustâq-Nizwâ, party split  
wuqûf 204, 208, 216, 225-6, 228, 232-4, 287-9, 321, 326, 338, 341-2, 417  
zakât, *see General Index under*; taxation  
zuhûr 224, 285, 290, 365, 429-30